

Street protests flare over new Congo government

KINSHASA (R) — Street protests erupted in Kinshasa Friday against the new government formed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and troops opened fire in the air to stop demonstrators.

Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, whose exclusion from President Laurent Kabila's administration sparked the protests, declared that he did not recognise the new government.

The firebrand politician also called for the withdrawal of foreign troops who helped Mr. Kabila's guerrilla alliance drive veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko from power in former Zaire.

"This government doesn't exist for me. I ask all the people to resist with their last energy all attempts to impose a government without popular legitimacy," Mr. Tshisekedi told a news conference.

Hundreds of Tshisekedi followers chanted anti-Kabila slogans and called for the pullout of Rwandan troops from his alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL).

A Reuters journalist followed the peaceful march from Tshisekedi's house in Limete into the city centre, past the U.S., French and Belgian embassies.

But troops firing in the air blocked the marchers before they reached the People's Palace, the seat of parliament.

A group of demonstrators were heading towards the parliament building and the soldiers opened fire in the air, one witness said. There was no indication of any casualties.

At his news conference Mr. Tshisekedi did not directly ask his fanatical supporters in the city of five million people to take to the streets, and also appeared to leave the door open for talks with Mr. Kabila.

Mr. Tshisekedi thanked African governments which had helped end the autocratic rule of Mr. Mobutu, who is ailing with cancer and fled the country as Mr. Kabila's forces took over.

"But I am asking them to recall the elements they have lent the AFDL so that the Zaireans can solve their problems between themselves," he said.

"I must add that with the departure of Mr. Mobutu peace will reign in the Great Lakes (region). He was involved in all the problems with our neighbours... Now that he has left all the reasons are there for us to agree," Mr. Tshisekedi added.

He took a jibe at Mr. Kabila's self-proclamation as president following the capture of Kinshasa.

"Not only I, but I think all of the radical opposition is agreed that this son of the country merits that function (the presidency). But it is not enough to self-proclaim oneself. There must be popular legitimacy," Mr. Tshisekedi said.

"He is a candidate for the presidency, and we will do everything so that he is so effectively but legally," he added.

Throughout the news conference, at which he spoke without notes, Mr. Tshisekedi stressed that his UDPS party had battled for 17 years for the state of law and democracy in Zaire. People were not ready to accept another dictatorship, he said.

Mr. Kabila, whose rebels captured the capital of the former Zaire on May 17, angered many in the city of five million by failing to appoint Mr. Tshisekedi prime minister of the new Democratic Republic of Congo.

"This is Kabila's first failure. Tshisekedi should be in his government," businessman Jean-Marie Tshamala told Reuters.

"We are only waiting for Tshisekedi's instruction to take to the streets," student Kambala Tshala, standing at the same newsstand in the Matonge district, chipped in.

Two days behind schedule, self-proclaimed President Kabila late Thursday announced an incomplete list of 13 cabinet ministers and dropped the position of prime minister.

As soon as he took charge of Africa's third biggest country, Mr. Kabila came under intense domestic pressure and some Western encouragement to appoint Mr. Tshisekedi to a key post such as the prime ministership.

He brushed aside those calls despite warnings that Tshisekedi, a longtime political foe of Mobutu, remains a hugely popular political figure in the capital of five million.

Senior members of his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) said six of the ministers on the list, run hourly Friday by national radio, were not alliance members.

But the pro-Tshisekedi La Référence newspaper said the alliance had awarded itself all but four posts.

But Le Phare, one of the newspapers supporting him, headlined: "Fears for the future."

"I am always wary of those who take power by force of arms," Alain Matama, a civil servant, said in Matonge.

In Togo, witnesses at the airport said Mr. Mobutu, who is fighting cancer, was supported on both sides by aides as he climbed onto the plane, which left to Morocco at 0910 GMT.

Mr. Mobutu arrived in Lome from his jungle palace at Gbadolite in northern Zaire Sunday night, a day after Mr. Kabila's rebels marched into Kinshasa.

He initially landed in Togo for a technical stopover but Togolese sources said the government had reluctantly agreed to let him stay longer because of his state of health. French Cooperation Minister Jacques Godfrain hinted Wednesday that France might be prepared to admit Mr. Mobutu for medical treatment.

Across the river from Kinshasa, neighbour Congo noted the change of power in former Zaire and said it was ready to support the efforts of the new authorities there to promote democracy.

A statement read on state radio by Foreign Minister Destin Arsene Tsaty-Mbounou said the government wanted to maintain "brotherly relations" with its larger neighbour but it did not mention Mr. Kabila by name.

In a tacit acknowledgement of Mr. Kabila's decision to rename Zaire as the Democratic Republic of Congo, its tiny neighbour referred to itself as Congo Brazzaville — the name it used before 1971 when the two nations had the same name.

"Congo Brazzaville takes note of the arrival of the new authorities and expresses its complete readiness to support their efforts at democratic restructuring," the minister said.

The statement, agreed by the government at a special cabinet meeting earlier this week, also appealed for international aid to help with an influx of refugees from former Zaire. Aid workers put the total at up to 8,000, mostly Rwandan Hutus.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) and Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko smile as they hug each other in the Kremlin (Reuters photo)

Russia gets new defence minister

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin Friday confirmed Igor Sergeev as defence minister charged with the difficult task of turning Russia's cumbersome, cash-strapped military into a leaner, professional force.

A Kremlin spokesman said Mr. Yeltsin had also named General Anatoly Kvashnin as acting head of the general staff.

The appointments follow Mr. Yeltsin's surprise decision Thursday to sack Defence Minister Igor Rodionov and Chief of the General Staff Viktor Samsonov. Mr. Yeltsin accused them of dragging their feet over urgently needed military reforms.

The new minister has headed the Strategic Rocket Forces since 1992, responsible for 756 inter-continental missiles with 3,535 nuclear warheads which make up Russia's strategic arsenal.

Gen. Sergeev, 59, has said he views Russia's nuclear force as the backbone of its defence, and describes

it as one that is especially economical at a time of spending cutbacks.

Russian ministers, facing lower than expected tax revenues, are struggling to find cash to fund their budget promises. They have already cut spending and promise to keep purse-strings tight regardless of likely demands from parliamentarians debating the cuts Friday.

The silver-haired, bespectacled Sergeev has spoken out in favour of a START-3 nuclear arms reduction agreement with the United States as an extension of the START-2 accord cutting Russian and American nuclear arsenals.

A man with good Western contacts, he has also argued for a political deal with NATO to prevent the stationing of nuclear forces on the territory of new Eastern European members the Atlantic alliance is expected to invite into NATO in July.

Mr. Yeltsin, who is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, promised during his reelection campaign last year to end conscription

by 2000 and create a modern, professional army.

But the plan has run into a shortage of funds and a marked lack of enthusiasm in the upper ranks.

Gen. Sergeev will also have to oversee a crackdown on high-level army corruption.

Military prosecutors say about 20 generals and 100 colonels are being investigated for graft. Military prosecutors this week arrested Konstantin Kobets, one of the country's top generals and a deputy defence minister, on charges of corruption. He denies the charges.

NTV commercial television said Friday that a loyal Yeltsin ally, Lieutenant General Viktor Chechevatov who commands the Far East military district, had been asked to head the general staff but had turned down the offer.

The head of the general staff is number two in Russia's armed forces. He is the third person, after the president and the defence minister, to have control over the use of nuclear weapons.

Japanese minister holds talks in Russia on investments, Kurils

MOSCOW (AFP) — Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda was holding talks Friday with his Russian counterpart Yevgeny Primakov and President Boris Yeltsin on investment ties and their territorial dispute over the Kurils.

Mr. Ikeda was expected to meet later in the day with First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov, his co-chairman in the Russo-Japanese Inter-Governmental Commission on Economic Development.

Mr. Ikeda's visit, which began Thursday, came amid a flurry of high-level contacts and what both Moscow and Tokyo describe as a significant warming in relations.

Mr. Nemtsov is to visit Tokyo in June and just last week, there was the first visit to Japan by a Russian defence minister since the foundation of the Soviet Union in 1917.

Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin told ITAR-TASS: "The schedule of (Ikeda's) visit is very full. Talks will be on a big scale."

"Our relations are developing normally. They now have a very good atmosphere, a good dynamism."

Hidehiko Hamada, Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman, told reporters at a briefing late Thursday that "there has been enormous progress on development of mutual comprehension."

Mr. Ikeda's visit "will be seen as very symbolic in the future," he said, adding that there were five Ikeda-Primakov meetings last year.

A concrete sign of the close relations is Tokyo's agreement to support Russia attending the Group of Seven meeting of industrialised nations in Denver this July as a formal member, making it the "summit of the eight."

There had been opposition to this, largely because of the dispute over the Russian-occupied Kuril Islands in the Pacific, which has prevented the two countries from signing a World War II peace treaty.

Mr. Hamada said that Japan still claimed sovereignty over the sparsely populated islands, but that "we are now much more flexible over discussing ways" to return the territory.

The islands — Kunashiri, Shikotan, Etorofu and the Habomai group of islets — were seized by Soviet troops following the end of

World War II.

Investment projects to be discussed include the Sakhalin oil and gas fields to be exploited in Far Eastern Russia by a consortium from Japan, Russia and the United States.

Negotiations are also underway on selection of Russian projects to be financed with \$500 million in humanitarian aid and \$400 million in a Japanese Export-Import Bank Credit.

"We would like the visit to expedite Japanese investments in the Russian economy," an unnamed diplomat told ITAR-TASS.

Meanwhile, Interfax quoted a Japanese embassy source in Moscow saying that Japan had agreed to reschedule Russian debt, which amounts to about \$1.8 billion, to March 1999.

Mr. Ikeda will leave Moscow for London Saturday for the first meeting with new Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

He will then head for Paris Sunday to attend a ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the officials said.

The foreign minister will return home on May 29.

Albania set for vital elections

TIRANA (R) — Elections aimed at preventing Albania reverting to chaos were back on course as the country's second-largest party agreed to take part in the vote.

Agreement by the Socialist Party to run in the June 29 election, provided there is full monitoring by the international community, ends months of deadlock and lifted a last obstacle to the ballot going ahead.

"We took a political decision which represents a responsible attitude of the Socialist Party to take part only in guaranteed free, democratic and fair elections."

Socialist Party Chairman Fatos Nano told reporters.

"The Socialist Party will only take part in elections that have an international guarantee they will be free, fair and equal," the party said in a statement.

Other parties in Prime Minister Bashkim Fino's nine-party government have not yet said whether they will take part in the vote.

However, European envoy Franz Vranitzky said in Vienna earlier that Mr. Fino had called him the previous night and assured him the parties had agreed to participate.

Albania needs the election to restore law and order after unrest in March sparked by the collapse of shady investment schemes that left many penniless.

The Socialists and other parties had refused to stand over electoral rules they said were tilted in favour of right-wing President Sali Berisha and his former ruling Democratic Party.

The Socialists, reformed heirs of the Communist Party that ruled this mountainous state with an iron fist for more than 40 years, are the main rivals to the Democratic Party.

Russian, Belarus leaders sign union charter

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko Friday signed a charter formalising a loose union between the two former Soviet republics.

The final text of the charter, agreed by Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Lukashenko Thursday, has not been made public. But Mr. Lukashenko said earlier Friday that Russia and Belarus, which signed the basic treaty declaring the creation of the union on April 2, would remain fully independent states.

Mr. Lukashenko said that the document would not move the integration of two Slav countries any further. "We will confirm 'de jure' what has existed 'de facto' for quite a while," said the hardline Belarus leader.

"By signing the charter we are just going to put into writing the process of integration between our countries which is already unfolding," Mr. Lukashenko told Ekho Moskvy radio.

Mr. Lukashenko arrived in Moscow Thursday and sorted out the remaining problems on a charter outlining the union and building on a largely declarative document which they signed on April 2.

He said they had decided to remove a disputed clause directing the union between two former Soviet republics towards the ultimate aim of forming a single federation, which Belarus had opposed.

"We decided that the whole concept of our union is based on the prospects of other countries joining it later," he said.

"Do you think Ukraine or Kazakhstan would join a Russia-Belarus union, something we would want to see, if it is a federation?" Mr. Lukashenko added.

Mr. Lukashenko said he and Mr. Yeltsin had decided that some of the decisions of the ruling bodies to be set up to oversee the union would be binding for the Belarus and Russian governments.

Among issues entrusted to the union bodies will be social protection, customs policies and coordination of foreign and military policies, he said.

But Mr. Lukashenko added that such decisions should be taken unanimously by both presidents, reducing the practical powers of the union's organs to a minimum.

Nationalist opponents of Mr. Lukashenko's authoritarian rule in Belarus have condemned the planned union as a plot by Moscow to revive its empire and rob Minsk of the independence it won when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

A few dozen demonstrators marched through Minsk Thursday to protest against the planned union. They burned down a Russian flag and tore portraits of Mr. Lukashenko. Police did not interfere.

Russian liberals bitterly oppose the union, saying a deal with Belarus, where the transition from communism has been slow, could hurt Russian democracy and tarnish Russia's image abroad.

But opinion polls show that the majority of the population in both states support the idea of close integration between the two former Soviet republics.

The declarative union treaty signed on April 2 was watered down after a last-minute intervention by newly-appointed liberals in the Russian government, worried that the original document gave Mr. Lukashenko too much power.

The charter, initiated at the same time, was then opened to public debate, but details of what the final version involves have been kept under wraps.

Afghan Shiites repulse Taliban onslaught

KABUL (AFP) — An anti-Taliban Shiite faction has held off a massive militia offensive aimed at breaking into their central Afghan mountain stronghold, aid sources reported Friday.

The fierce attack on the Shibar Pass, which guards the entrance to the Hezb-e-Wahdat base of Bamian, has left at least 100 of the puritanical militia dead and hundreds more injured, a Western aid worker said.

"The ferocity of the fighting could be heard as far away as Bamian, which is nearly 60 kilometres from the front," a Western aid worker arriving here reported.

The aid worker said the ethnic-Hazara Shiite fighters were in a confident and jubilant mood, reporting wiping out at least 200 mainly Pashtoon Taliban soldiers attempting to break their lines.

"From the sound of the fighting it doesn't seem to be an exaggeration," the aid worker added.

Another aid agency based here, which maintains daily contact with Bamian — which is around 120 kilometres north west of Kabul — confirmed Hezb-e-Wahdat had inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban.

It added the Taliban offensive was launched Tuesday, but after four days of ferocious attacks had failed to break defences on the Shibar Pass, which lies a mere 40 kilometres east of Bamian.

Taliban sources here

denied any heavy losses at the front, claiming the militia were aiming at steady progress over the pass and confident in the spread of pro-militia revolts throughout the north.

"Northern Afghanistan is collapsing to us quickly, so we do not need to take such risks," a Taliban spokesman here, Amir Khan Muttaqi, told journalists.

On Monday a powerful alliance commander, Abdul Malik, revolted against northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum enabling the Taliban to shatter Gen. Dostum's western flank and sparking similar revolts to the east.

The Taliban have also captured Ismael Khan, former governor of Afghanistan's western Herat province.

Mr. Khan was handed over to the Islamic militia after his arrest in northwestern Badghis province following the revolt.

Afghan sources said the well-known commander, who bravely fought the Soviet Red Army during its 1979-89 occupation of Afghanistan in his native Herat region, had been taken to the Taliban's Kandahar headquarters.

Mr. Khan, an ethnic Tajik in his 50s from Shindand district in Herat, was governor under ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani until the strategic province bordering Iran in September 1996.

The Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat

faction is allied to Gen. Dostum and the Kabul government ousted from the capital September last year, and together the northern-based grouping controls around a third of the war-torn country.

The Taliban militia, who control at least two-thirds of Afghanistan and its war-ravaged capital Kabul, have vowed to impose a puritanical form of Islamic Law on a country gripped by 17 years of civil war.

Meanwhile, anti-Taliban jets Thursday blew up a vital bridge in northwestern Afghanistan, cutting the Islamic militia's road link to a nearby rebel-held province, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

The jets, belonging to Gen. Dostum, destroyed Bal Murghab Bridge in Badghis province in repeated sorties, the private news service said.

No independent confirmation was immediately available of the report.

"The bombing was a desperate move. It reflects panic among the opposition forces," a senior Taliban spokesman Abdul Wakil told the Pakistan-based monitoring service from the southwestern Afghan province of Kandahar.

The destruction of the bridge severed the land link between the Taliban held Badghis and nearby Faryab province, captured by the forces of General Abdul Malik, AIP said.

It would impede supplies and reinforcement to Far-

yab. Pakistan Thursday indirectly welcomed the pro-Taliban uprising in northern Afghanistan, saying the new developments would lead to formation of a broadly representative government.

"We hope present developments in Afghanistan will lead to a government generally acceptable to the Afghan people," a Pakistani Foreign Office spokesman told a press briefing.

"Our idea of all ethnic groups being represented (in government) is in a way taking shape," he said, in first official comments here since Monday's rebellion against Gen. Dostum.

Several Uzbek factions were now actively supporting the Taliban Islamic militia, the spokesman said.

He said the revolt by Mr. Malik indicated "deep divisions" within the Uzbek warlord's National Islamic Movement and "is illustrative of widespread support for the uprising."

But the spokesman stopped short of recognising the Taliban government, saying for the moment Pakistan had not taken a decision to accord recognition to the Taliban administration.

The spokesman, asserting "non-interference" in Afghanistan's internal affairs, said: "We want resolution of the conflict through intra-Afghan dialogue leading to formation of a broad-based government representing all groups."

Peru captures key rebels, biggest arms haul

LIMA (R) — Peruvian security forces captured the military leaders of two key Maoist Shining Path units during a massive operation in the guerrillas' jungle heartland, anti-terrorist police sources said Thursday.

The sweep, which has been going on for a week, also brought the biggest guerrilla arms haul in Peru since the start of Shining Path's uprising in 1980, the

sources added. The exact number of rebels caught was not known but the operation concentrated on the leaders rather than rank and file members, the sources said.

They said the now-leaderless units were responsible for controlling the dense jungle around Mohna and Pucayacu, 320 kilometres northeast of Lima, where Shining Path's top decision-

making body usually operates.

"Here it is not soldiers that have been caught, it is generals," one anti-terrorist police source said.

The army also located several large arms caches, capturing over 30 anti-tank rockets, a few anti-aircraft rockets, one mortar, over 30 rifles, 300 grenades, and 9,000 bullets.

"We have taken the largest

amount of arms and ammunition in the whole anti-terrorist fight," one source said. "Their armed power has suffered a tremendous blow."

The blow against Shining Path coincided with recent attacks by the group in Lima that raised fears the guerrillas were beginning a new campaign of violence.



Supporters of Indonesia's United Development Party (PPP) burn tyres in central Jakarta on Friday after police stopped their cars and motorcycles from parading through the capital's streets. Campaigning for the May 29 general election ended Friday. Violence flared between supporters of the ruling Golkar Party and the Muslim-oriented United Development Party in Jakarta Friday, with police firing tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the clashing groups (Reuters photo)

Indonesian police fire to disperse campaign crowd

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian riot police fired warning shots to disperse a mob of thousands, who were hurling stones at security forces in Jakarta Friday, on the last day of Indonesia's violent election campaign period.

One man was reportedly shot in the foot as riot police tried to disperse the crowd, and around seven people were arrested and taken away to an unknown destination, the witnesses said.

The crowd, many of them supporters of the Muslim-based United Development Party (PPP), burned tyres and flags of the ruling Golkar Party in the middle of the road and pelted security officials in the south Jakarta suburb of Ciputat, the witnesses said.

By 4:15 p.m. (0915 GMT) the situation was still tense but under control, an AFP reporter saw, but the street was still closed off to the public.

A police armoured vehicle also began firing water jets to disperse the crowd who were pelting it back with stones and bricks, the reporter said.

The glass fronts of at least 25 shops and businesses were shattered while stones continued to fly in the area, the reporter added.

Helicopters could be seen hovering over the troubled area, and reinforcement troops have converged on the area, another witness said.

The local sub-district office in Ciputat told AFP the noisy crowd numbered well above 7,000 people.

Thousands of PPP supporters have poured into Jakarta streets despite stern warnings from the military that security personnel would crack down on any unrest during the last day of the 27-day campaign period. The elections will be held on May 29.

PPP officials have cancelled all official campaign programmes Friday in the capital following ongoing violence throughout the campaign. On Tuesday mass unrest broke out between PPP supporters and security forces, leaving one bystander shot dead and scores injured.

New storm lashes Bangladesh, hampers relief efforts

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (R) — A new storm lashed coastal Bangladesh Friday, hampering disaster relief efforts just days after a cyclone killed at least 105 people and made more than one million homeless, officials said.

Strong winds and heavy rain blasted Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar resort and nearby islands in a lower-key rerun of Monday's devastating storm.

Unofficial sources put the feared death toll from the cyclone at nearly 1,000 with hundreds of fishermen still missing in the Bay of Bengal. Sources also reported some deaths from diarrhoea, which was spreading among those left homeless.

Officials said Friday's 75 kph storm swept areas still recovering from the cyclone, dumping nearly 80 millimetres of rain on and around Cox's Bazar and adding to the misery of thousands of families sleeping outside.

The high winds blew away many houses which were being rebuilt following Monday's storm, they said.

Nearly 150 fishermen missing at sea for four days returned to their island homes Thursday night, but the fate of 600 others were still not known, fishing community leaders said.

"We only hope they all would come back," said Kabir Ahmad, leader of Mechanised Fishing Boats Association in Cox's Bazar.

Residents of Cox's Bazar and islands told reporters that the most affected areas had been without relief supplies till Thursday and that electricity was still out.

The state-run Dainik Bangla newspaper said Friday that 14 people had died as diarrhoea spreads in cyclone-battered areas.

Health officials in Chittagong declined to confirm the deaths but said around 400 medical teams had been deployed in coastal areas to try to prevent disease.

"After giving first aid to cyclone victims they are now mainly working against disease," said Dr. Mazharul Islam, deputy civil surgeon of Chittagong.

Unofficial sources said Friday that about 10,000 people had contracted diarrhoea and at least 15 had died. Hospitals in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar received about 1,000 patients suffering from diarrhoea since Monday, doctors told reporters.

"Scattered incidents of diarrhoeal attack are very common in many areas during this time of the year," one Chittagong Hill official earlier said.

"People are not very health conscious and they sometimes drink water from derelict sources and eat rubbish (which cause the disease)," he said.

Jawadul Karim, press secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, told reporters Thursday that 105 people had so far been confirmed dead. After the cyclone, he put the number of people affected at nearly 2.5 million, most of them made homeless. Mr. Karim said about 10,000 people were injured and more than 600,000 houses damaged.

The U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva said Wednesday the cyclone had killed at least 200 people. Officials in the stricken areas earlier put the death toll at least 121.

Low-lying Bangladesh is prone to devastation from cyclones. The country's worst storm in 1991 killed at least 138,000 people and left millions homeless.

The government said it had been conducting a massive relief operation backed by navy vessels and air force helicopters.

On Thursday it asked for international help to build more cyclone shelters in coastal areas to minimise deaths from future storms.

"We have told the international community that we need help for building 2,000 more shelters in cyclone prone areas," Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan told a news conference in Dhaka.

Karadzic's 'confessions' to be published in daily

BELGRADE (AFP) — The "exclusive confessions" of Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader indicted on war crimes charges are to be published in a pro-government Serbian daily, Vecernje Novosti from Monday, the paper said.

On its front page Friday, the daily quoted Mr. Karadzic as saying: "If I go to the Hague, many others, who judges would not like to see, will have to go there."

Mr. Karadzic, a former Sarajevo psychiatrist who led the Serb bid for secession from Bosnia, tops the list of 74 war crimes suspects indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague.

He was indicted, twice, in 1995 with war crimes including crimes against humanity, breaches of the Geneva conventions on war and with organising genocide.

"I am not afraid of being arrested. They (the judges) preferred me dead more than alive," he reportedly told the daily.

Last Monday, a Belgrade weekly, argument said that Mr. Karadzic, who was forced to step down as Bosnian Serb "president" in 1996 by Washington was "preparing to travel to the Hague to defend himself against war crimes charges."

It said he was fed up of being cooped up in his heavily guarded villa on the outskirts of the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Pale, the Serb "capital" east of Sarajevo, unable to travel.

The international mediator in Bosnia, Carl Bildt, called at a meeting earlier this year of NATO's governing North Atlantic Council for a special force to be set up to hunt down Mr. Karadzic and other war crimes suspects.

Mr. Bildt contends that Mr. Karadzic continues to wield power, and is behind moves which are frustrating the peace process in Bosnia.

"If he wants to visit the Hague he will be welcomed, that is where he should be," said Mr. Bildt's spokesman Colum Murphy last week.

U.S. seeks to correct impression on Bosnia

WASHINGTON (R) — The State Department has said there were no plans to keep American troops in Bosnia beyond June 1998 despite earlier statements by a senior official.

"SFOR ends in June 1998. There are no plans for American troops to remain beyond June 1998," spokesman Nicholas Burns told Reuters.

Mr. Burns sought to correct the impression left by a senior State Department who three hours earlier had given reporters a briefing on a new Bosnia initiative unveiled Thursday by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The senior official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, left open the possibility that U.S. troops could remain in Bosnia past June 1998.

Asked if U.S. troops would be out of Bosnia by that date, the senior official said: "I'm not making any commitment. The president has not yet made any commitment."

Asked if the NATO-led Stabilisation Force for Bosnia (SFOR) might emerge later in another form, the official said: "That is an issue that the president will be addressing at a future time. I'm sure. What has been decided is a statement of fact: the SFOR mandate ends in June 1998 and the future still has to be decided."

The official also said the troop issue was not addressed in the just-completed six-week review of U.S. Bosnia policy.

But Mr. Burns said the decision on troops was "re-affirmed" in the policy review.

"What was reaffirmed is that we believe SFOR will end in June 1998 and we have no plans and no intention for any American troop presence in Bosnia beyond June 1998," Mr. Burns said.

He said he sought to "close the door" on any suggestion that Mrs. Albright and Defence Secretary William Cohen, who has insisted American troops will be gone by June 1998, are not united.

He did not explain how the senior State Department official who briefed reporters could have made comments that seemed at odds with established policy.

Chirac set to win poll gamble

PARIS (AFP) — The first round of voting in French general elections takes place Sunday with polls suggesting that President Jacques Chirac will pull off his risky gamble to win himself a conservative majority in parliament until the year 2002.

An opinion poll published in Britain's Daily Telegraph Friday said the right-wing coalition government would win a 51-seat majority in the National Assembly, with the government on 314, the Socialists and assorted left on 236 and the Communists on 27.

The extreme right National Front was predicted to win no seats, despite having the support of one in eight voters.

The Ipsos poll carried out for the Bank Sbc Warburg using a sample of 2,251 people on May 20 and 21 reflected similar results by CSA, Louis Harris and Sofres surveys Thursday.

All polls have suggested that more than 35 per cent of voters might abstain from what has been a very lacklustre campaign.

Under French law, opinion polls cannot be published before the first round of the election Sunday. Round two is on June 1.

But pollsters and news media have used the Internet to duck around the rules.

Prime Minister Alain Juppe took a cautious line Friday, saying the first round of voting would be hard to interpret because of the number of candidates and it was necessary to "mobilise now" for the second round.

In a phone-in programme on French radio, Mr. Juppe predicted a wide "dispersal of votes" in Sunday's first round that would leave no clear indication of the election's ultimate direction.

Asked by a listener to commit himself not to be the next prime minister in case of a conservative victory, Mr. Juppe, who is deeply unpopular, said the choice of prime minister was entirely up to Mr. Chirac.

But Mr. Juppe said he was "not a candidate to succeed himself."

Referring to opposition Socialist leader Lionel Jospin, Mr. Juppe asked "what is important for the France of tomorrow? Is it to know if the prime minister will be called Lionel or Alain, or is it to know the policies we shall follow?" adding that the political debate should not be reduced to "questions of persons."

Mr. Juppe criticised the Socialist programme as "sweetened up and contradictory" and warned it would lead to a crisis in Europe.

The rightwing, which has been campaigning on its unpopular four-year record rather than on specific pledges, has expressed worry about abstentionism and protest votes in the first round.

Winding up the Socialist campaign Thursday night in the southwestern city of Toulouse, Mr. Jospin said the campaign was still wide open — and that a win by the centre-right was not a certainty.

"They are getting scared, and we have hope of winning," he told a rally of 5,000 supporters.

Mr. Chirac called the election a year earlier than he had to in order to win a fresh mandate from the French to push through austerity measures so that France can meet the criteria for European Monetary Union.

A left-wing victory over the next two weekends would mean "cohabitation," with the conservative Gaullist president having to share power with Socialist Jospin as prime minister leading a government in which Communists would have portfolios.

For his part, former European Commission President Jacques Delors said a left-wing victory would strengthen rather than endanger European Monetary Union (EMU).

Mr. Delors dismissed fears raised by Mr. Chirac of a crisis in European relations if the Socialists won power. In an interview published in the Financial Times Friday, Mr. Delors said the left was as committed as the right-wing to the Maastricht Treaty.

"The important thing that has come out of this campaign is that our foreign partners no longer question France's commitment to economic and monetary union, because the three biggest parties — the Socialists, the RPR (Gaullist) and (centre-right) UDF — have shown they are for the application of the Maastricht Treaty."

He predicted these parties would win around three quarters of the vote in the first round Sunday. "To find higher support (for EMU) you would have to go to Italy or Belgium," he said.

He said the more Eurosceptic Communists — allied to the Socialists in this election — would have to toe the line set by Mr. Jospin.

Unionists look set to lose Belfast City Hall

BELFAST (AFP) — Traditional Unionist domination of Belfast City Hall looked set to end Friday after Northern Ireland polls that strengthened the local government base of Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing.

The final tally was due later Friday but after more than half the votes had been counted, Sinn Fein, which won two House of Commons seats in this month's British general election, appeared to have increased its share of the overall vote by as much as four per cent compared to 1993.

The party had taken 16 per cent of the votes counted so far from Wednesday's elections for the 26 district councils, the same figure as in the general election but four points up since the last local polls four years ago.

Although the fringe Loyalist Progressive Unionist Party may win three seats in Belfast, observers said that thousands of Protestants apparently failed to vote in what could lose the two main Unionist parties control in Belfast City Hall.

A swing of two seats in the 51-seat Belfast Council would give a majority to non-Unionists and would be a telling psychological blow to the Unionists, who seek to maintain British rule in the province.

The nationalists, who see themselves as Irish and not British, are unlikely to be able to form a majority in the council because of the presence of the non-demonstrational Alliance Party.

But the possible shape of things to come can be seen in the current rotation between nationalists and Unionists of the positions of mayor and deputy mayor of the northwestern city of Londonderry. In Londonderry, a largely Catholic city, the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) accused Sinn Fein of widespread vote stealing, a charge which the party's national chairman Mitchell McLaughlin vehemently denied.

Meanwhile, SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon and Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis accused the government of boosting Sinn Fein support by allowing government officials to meet with the party on the day of the elections.

Rescue teams rush medicine, food to India quake survivors

JABALPUR, India (R) — Rescue teams Friday rushed food and medicine to some 4,000 people whose homes were razed in a powerful earthquake that killed dozens of people in central India and injured more than 1,000.

Authorities said 38 people were killed in the quake that struck India's heartland in Madhya Pradesh state early Thursday and measured 6.0 on the open-ended Richter scale.

"Rescue teams" set up camps for the 3,000 to 4,000 homeless in Jabalpur, a city of 1.2 million people 720 kilometres southeast of New Delhi and about 20 kilometres from the epicentre. Volunteers from the Indian Red Cross Society distributed foodgrains, medicine and bed sheets to the homeless.

In Jabalpur's Victoria Hospital, survivors lay on blood-spattered beds.

"The earth shook like a see-saw and the roof fell on me," Ram Kali Bai, 60, from Puranabasti village near Jabalpur, said from her hospital bed.

Relief workers brought bamboo and wooden logs to villages outside Jabalpur that were flattened by the quake.

Villagers, many of whom spent the night in their fields, were advised to keep the roofs low in their new dwellings to reduce the risk of injury in the event of another quake.

Ajay Singh, a senior official in Jabalpur, said the tremor caused extensive damage to property but killed relatively few people despite its magnitude.

The quake, which struck at dawn, levelled several villages near Jabalpur. But relatively few villagers died as they were either sleeping outside in the summer heat or were doing early morning chores outside their huts, officials and residents said.

"The death toll is not likely to rise very much because most of the houses that collapsed were made of mud and thatch, and no big buildings fell," Mr. Singh told Reuters.

The Geological Survey of India was sending a team of experts from New Delhi to assess damage and the chances of aftershocks in the region, part of the Narmada River basin that has been hit by five quakes of at least 6.0 on the Richter scale since 1927.

Soldiers helped to clear debris from Jabalpur, where several hundred people were still in hospital, many with spinal injuries, limb fractures or pelvic injuries.

Many panic-stricken residents of Jabalpur shifted their beds outdoors, saying they feared possible aftershocks.

"I've not taken my family inside the house and I do not plan to either," said Jabalpur resident Sunderlal Tiwari. He said five people in the next house had been buried in their sleep.

The earthquake was centred on the village of Kosamhat, 23 kilometres south of Jabalpur. All of that village's 160 houses, mostly mud huts, were flattened, leaving more than 1,000 residents homeless, elder Mohan Lal Yadav said.

In September 1993, about 10,000 people were killed in neighbouring Maharashtra state when an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale struck the Latur-Osmanabad region.

A Seismology Department official in New Delhi said the quake in Latur was much closer to the surface than the one in Madhya Pradesh, making it more deadly. In addition, the soil in central India was more solid.

Defence in Oklahoma City blast trial suggests bomber may be dead

DENVER (R) — The defence in the Oklahoma City bombing trial has launched an all-out attack on the government's evidence against Timothy McVeigh, suggesting that the real bomber may have died in the blast.

The defence called nine witnesses on the first day of its case Thursday, casting doubt on the prosecution's time line and implying other unidentified people may have been involved in the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building that killed 168 people.

The prosecution, which rested its case Wednesday after calling 137 witnesses, says Mr. McVeigh, 29, is an extreme right-winger who bombed the federal building to avenge the deaths of 80 branch Davidian cult members in a confrontation with federal agents at Waco, Texas, in 1993.

The decorated Gulf war veteran has pleaded not guilty to murder and conspiracy charges but could face the death penalty if convicted.

After the Oklahoma state medical examiner testified that an unidentified leg was found in the rubble of the Murrah building, a British forensic expert said it was possible for someone close to a bomb to disintegrate when it blew up.

"One must assume ... that the rest of that body must have been disintegrated," said Thomas Marshall, a former state pathologist for Northern Ireland who conducted many autopsies on bombing victims before he retired in 1989.

The testimony of Mr. Marshall, now a consultant, backed up the defence theory that the bomber may have died in the huge blast that destroyed the Murrah building.

People killed in bombings were usually missed by someone, so "when nobody misses them, it reinforces the suggestion that the deceased is involved in the bombing," he said.

However, Mr. Marshall conceded under questioning by the prosecution that he had not personally examined the leg and did not know where it was found.

Denver defence attorney and trial analyst David Japha was not impressed by the defence's opening and found unbelievable its suggestion that the unidentified leg belonged to the bomber.

"The strength of the government's case is now coming out. We see after the first day of the defence case just how difficult it is going to be for the defence to convince these jurors of anything," he told reporters.

Vicki Beemer, a clerk at Elliott's Body Shop in Junction City, Kansas, said a man calling himself Robert Kling was with another man when he came to pick up a Ryder rental truck two days before the bombing.

But she could not remember what either man looked like. Asked in turn by defence and prosecution lawyers, Ms. Beemer could not say whether Mr. McVeigh, sitting in the courtroom, was or was not Kling.

The government says the Ryder truck, packed with ammonium nitrate and fuel oil, was used to bomb the Murrah building and that Kling was really Mr. McVeigh. After the blast, the FBI launched a nationwide manhunt for another suspect, dubbed "John Doe No. 2," but never found him.

Kling wanted a truck that would carry 2,270 kilograms of cargo, Ms. Beemer said. An expert witness for the prosecution had estimated that the bomb probably contained between 1,360 and 2,720 kilograms of explosives.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 684311, 699634
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Importance of human dimension

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan's reaffirmation during his talks with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook that "soft security" is a very essential component for attaining Middle East peace is a timely reminder of the nature of difficulties that the peace process encounters. Prince Hassan's suggestion would require that the humanitarian dimension peace tops economic and political considerations. The Prince's emphasis on the humanitarian aspects of the effort to resolve the various elements of the conflicts and disputes in the area comes as no surprise given his internationally recognised role to promote humanitarian issues worldwide. As a matter of fact the Prince was the first to call on the U.N. to think and act with the human dimension as its priority when it seeks solutions to global problems. It will be recalled that along with Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, the Crown Prince was the co-chairman of the International Commission on Humanitarian Issues in the early eighties which charted the way for the application of humanitarian considerations on several fronts that extended from deforestation, to street children, to poverty, to the environment and to human freedoms and rights.

To try to convince all the parties in the Middle East to put on a human face to the continued search for a final and durable resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is in itself a living testimony of Jordan's enduring trust and faith in humanitarianism as a viable and operational way of dealing with inter-human problems be they political or economic. Had the antagonists on both sides of the fence approached their differences with humanitarian considerations in mind, we would have been closer to the goal of a permanent and just peace for all.

It must be conceded that what prevented us from reaching the ultimate goal of peace so far is the absence of humanitarian considerations altogether. Suffice it to remember that the existing stumbling blocks to peace on the Israeli-Palestinian front, mainly the Jewish settlement plans on Palestinian soil, the cycle of violence between the two camps, or the non-fulfilment of the yearning of one dispossessed people for a homeland of their own, would all have been more effectively dealt with had humanitarian factors been given the necessary degree of prominence that they deserve.

Given the renewed efforts to restart the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority for which Cairo among other parties are contributing, it would be a propitious occasion to begin thinking in humanitarian terms. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will be the guest of His Majesty King Hussein today to discuss what appears to be an Egyptian initiative. President Mubarak is scheduled to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Sharm Al Sheikh Tuesday. This flurry of diplomatic activity is desperately needed to save what has been painstakingly achieved on the peace front. A touch of humanitarianism to these efforts would certainly help to bridge the existing gap between the two sides.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Dustour backed the government's plans to improve the living conditions of refugees living in camps in the Kingdom, saying that improvement of living conditions does not mean settlement of refugees permanently in Jordan. Billions of dollars are needed for the settlement of the refugees, a sum which a single country with meagre resources like Jordan can by no means afford, according to Rakan Majali. The writer said that the government has allocated JD 430 million to improve the living conditions of the poor, including residents of the refugee camps, because they have been lacking the basic needs of life and the necessary services infrastructure. He said that the refugees, who have lived in the Arab countries for decades, retain their right to repatriation or compensation when a final settlement has been reached, but in the meantime, the Arab host countries should at least provide these unfortunate people with the basic services and enable them to live in a clean, healthy and hygienic environment. Since no settlement has been reached, he added, at least basic services like water, electricity and roads should be provided to alleviate the sufferings of the unfortunate people.

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm said that the government seems to have temporarily won the battle against the journalists and the Press Association, whose members have withdrawn their resignations. But winning the round temporarily does not mean that the government is absolved of any responsibility for the turmoil, particularly as the journalists have made their point and have protested the temporary law which they believe will be detrimental to their profession, said Taher Al Adwan. The writer said that the journalists will now wait for the convening of the coming Parliament, which will debate the temporary law and give its decision. He said that the problem exists despite the government's temporary victory and the temporary law will be imposed despite the general public feeling that with this law democracy is going many steps backwards. He said the government's justifications for this temporary law in the absence of Parliament are totally unacceptable and a practice contravening democracy.

The Jordanian Perspective

Aid package for the Middle East should achieve the purpose it was earmarked for

By Dr. Musa Keilani

IT IS indeed quite heartening to note that for the first time, the U.S. is looking at its approach to direct financial aid to the Middle East against the backdrop of what has become a permanent feature of American policy: \$5.1 billion of aid to Israel and Egypt every year since the signing of the Camp David agreement.

The rationale behind adopting that decision in 1979, to help shore up the state of peace between Israel and Egypt, was that such aid was important since the U.S. was anxious to see peace and security prevailing in a region vital to American interests.

But today, in the wake of the Madrid peace conference and the progress (despite the logjams and hurdles) in Arab-Israeli peace talks, it has been established that the Camp David formula has ceased to be the sole pillar for peace in the region. Other players have been brought in, and it has become vital for the U.S. to have a very close look at the scenario as a whole rather than limiting its assessment to Camp David, in the context of broader peace in the region.

Washington tells us that the days of direct financial assistance are gone and, if anything, the U.S. legislature is bent upon axing foreign aid. Well, Washington knows its own political workings and as such, we have no choice but to accept its decisions. However, we cannot but remind Washington that it is continuing to pump over \$5 billion to Israel and Egypt with little congressional snags (not to mention other direct and indirect assistance that runs into

several more billions of dollars ending up in Israel). It simply means that at least \$5 billion is available today to serve the U.S. purpose of supporting peace in the Middle East.

So the question narrows down to whether it is possible for a "redistribution" of this amount among all players in the Middle East peace process.

Shortly after the Arab-Israeli peace talks were launched with the Madrid conference in 1991, some 30 or so non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches and other institutions in the U.S. were the first to focus attention on the need for a revamped American approach to aid to Middle Eastern countries.

From our point of view, here in Jordan, the groups did an excellent job at preparing all relevant documentation and forwarding it to everyone who mattered in Washington, including the administration, the Congress and lobby groups as well as leaders in the Middle East.

It was against the backdrop of this initiative, which was supported by parallel efforts of the groups concerned to convince Israel and Egypt to make a compromise, that several Israeli officials, notably Yossi Beilin, asserted that Israel should be able to stand on its feet and do away with the need for U.S. assistance. Indeed, Beilin got into political trouble over the comment.

Of course, Egypt reacted rather predictably. The uproar we heard from Cairo over Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — despite the

merits of the Egyptian position and our own support for that position — was part of Egypt's way of reminding Washington that the U.S. should not take for granted the state of Egyptian-Israeli for granted. No doubt, somewhere along the line, the possibility that the U.S. might even be looking at the chunk of assistance to Egypt had alarmed Cairo.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, went on record during his election campaign early last year that he was aiming at getting rid of Israel's dependence on U.S. aid in three years if he were given power.

Now that he is indeed in power, it is of keen interest for all of us to know how Netanyahu looks at the possibility of Washington distributing slices of the aid to other players in the Middle East. Or perhaps, we had better wait for another two years to allow Netanyahu to meet his self-set deadline.

In Washington meanwhile, no administration official is even willing to acknowledge the existence of the proposal made by the group of NGOs and churches, despite the fact that several thousand copies of the document were sent to address throughout Washington, including every member of Congress and every bureaucrat in the state, defence and treasury departments.

But the reality on the ground today warrants that Washington look closely at the aid package for the Middle East with a view to ensuring that the funds do achieve the purpose they were earmarked for in the first place.

Arias: We must all become less selfish, less contentious and find compassion for the poorest on the planet

OSCAR ARIAS, the former president of Costa Rica, can hardly be accused of resting on his laurels since winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. As founder of the Arias Foundation, a Costa Rica-based research centre that promotes demilitarisation, reconciliation and political stability, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of democracy and economic justice in Central America and elsewhere. Combating poverty is high on his agenda. Arias, 46, has been a guest lecturer this year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass. Following are excerpts of an interview he granted at his office at MIT to Newsweek's Ken Shulman:

Question: You believe that poverty is undermining world democracy?

A: If democracy does not improve the conditions of human life, it will always be in peril. In Latin America, we can say that democracy is on its way to winning the battle against dictatorship and authoritarianism. But it is losing the war against poverty. Half

the population of Latin America lives below the poverty line. Democracy is not only the distribution of political power. It is, or should also be, the distribution of economic power. With the inequalities that have arisen over the last 15 years, it will be increasingly difficult for democracy to consolidate its gains.

Q: Are you suggesting that the world's poor will lose faith in democracy and its institutions?

A: I see an alarming apathy in much of the world. For the first time since the 1929 stock-market crash, less than 50 per cent of the American electorate turned out for the last presidential elections. People do not vote because they think voting won't change their situation. The poor and disenfranchised of the world don't feel they have elected officials who represent them. A democracy of this type cannot sustain itself.

Q: In Latin America, voters are discouraged by endemic political corruption. Maybe U.S. voters just see no pressing need for change.

A: You can interpret voter abstention either way: as

ratification or protest. But go and ask U.S. voters what they think about their politicians, and you'll find out which of the two interpretations is correct. Political corruption is a permanent threat to democracy, and it exists in both developed and developing nations. Unfortunately, we live in a time when the majority of people are disillusioned with government and with their elected officials.

Apart from low voter turnout, do you see any other signs that U.S. democracy is eroding?

The most worrisome is the widening social and economic rift. I am very critical of U.S. leaders for reducing welfare benefits for the poor while cutting taxes on the rich. U.S. politicians think exclusively of being elected and therefore tell the people what they want to hear. Today Mr. Gallup and Mr. Harris are more important to U.S. leaders than Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton and Lincoln.

Q: What would you tell Americans?

A: First, I would tell them that poor people and poor

countries are the biggest losers of the cold war. In order to prevent the spread of communism, U.S. foreign aid was channelled generously to Latin America and other regions according to geo-strategic interests.

"We live in a world where the richest 20 per cent of the population is 60 times richer than the poorest 20 per cent. This is a world where 400 multimillionaires have more wealth than half the world's population. It is an open invitation to conflict."

Unfortunately, this foreign aid is still distributed according to political criteria and not the needs of the world's population. Second, I would like to point out that foreign direct investment will not solve the problems of the world's poorest nations, since 80 per cent of that investment is concentrated in 12 countries and all of those, with the exception of China, are middle-income nations. Third, the liberalisation of

trade is not going to solve the problems of Haiti, Nicaragua or sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, consider the fact that the combined debt of all sub-Saharan African nations is equivalent to just one per cent of the combined GDP of the world's

industrialised nations. This debt is preventing those countries from investing in human development. I find it disconcerting that this debt has not been forgiven.

Q: You've been critical of the United States' defence spending. Yet the defence industry creates many jobs, both in the United States and abroad.

A: The United States tries to justify spending \$265 billion a year on defence by saying that it generates

employment. More than jobs, what the defence industry really generates is profit for a select few. The United States would be better off if it invested its resources in infrastructure, education, health and low-cost housing, as such investments produce benefits for all. We live in a world where the richest 20 per cent of the population is 60 times richer than the poorest 20 per cent. This is a world where 400 multimillionaires have more wealth than half the world's population. It is an open invitation to conflict.

Q: What can world leaders do to alleviate this conflict?

A: We need leaders who possess a clear vision, who can take on the real challenges that put the peace and security of our planet at risk: poverty, injustice, illiteracy, disease, environmental degradation, drugs. Our leaders have to understand that the 21st century cannot survive with the ethics of the 20th century. We must all become less selfish, less contentious and find within our souls the necessary compassion for the poorest people on the planet.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

'Freedom of expression removed by the new amendments to the Press and Publications Law'

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

COLUMNS AND editorials in the local press were unanimous this week in their discussion of the amendments to the Press and Publications Law, voicing severe criticism and demanding its annulment. The papers also discussed Turkey's incursions into Iraq, the Middle East and domestic issues.

Oreih Rintawi, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law constitute a major step backwards and one that would render scores of journalists unemployed when their weekly papers go out of business in three months' time.

He said that since almost none of the weekly tabloids can come up with a JD 300,000 capital, and since they can by no means secure editors with 10 years experience, as demanded by the amendments to the law, almost 20 weeklies are expected to fold soon.

The writer said there was really no urgent need for such amendments which,

according to the Constitution, must be debated in Parliament before they can become law.

Fahed Fanek, a writer for Al Ra'i daily, said that the amendments clearly display the government's intention to deal with the journalists as enemies of the nation and show that there is not regard given to the journalists' gains and achievements of the past.

The amendments are bound to force the weeklies to close down because they cannot meet the almost impossible conditions imposed by these amendments.

He said that freedom of expression and freedom of press lie at the basis of democracy, but with the new amendments to the law, the basic elements of democracy are removed.

The writer criticised remarks by the minister of state for information affairs who was quoted as claiming that the amendments raise the ceiling of democracy. He said that imposing more penalties on the journalists and new conditions making their work impossible can by no

means be a welcome development.

Mohammad Daoud, a writer for Al Dustour, said the new amendments are considered by the Jordanian journalists as a means of reimposing government hegemony on the press and restricting freedoms.

It is clear now that the government has sought to find fault with the journalists' writings and the weeklies' articles in order to justify its move to stifle the voice of the opposition in this country, charged the writer.

The journalists have no alternative but to resort to the Supreme Court, which can prove that the government has violated the Constitution by issuing the amendments which are opposed by all political shades in Jordan, said the writer.

He added that if the journalists accept the new amendments, they will be accepting defeat and the loss of all the gains they have made under democracy.

Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm daily, strongly criticised the gov-

ernment's attitude towards the estimated 60 journalists who staged a protest in front of the Prime Ministry over the new amendments to the Press and Publications Law.

While the journalists were exercising their basic right under democracy, the government resorted to violence by ordering the security forces to beat the protesters and detain some of them, said the writer.

By so doing, the government contributed to distorting the image of this country before the world television networks and invited condemnation of the act by all political and cultural circles here and abroad.

He said that the government has no alternative but to open a dialogue with the journalists if it wants to avoid further confrontations.

Rakan Majali, a writer for Al Dustour, described the government's introduction of the amendments to the press law as an unprecedented act since it never happened before that such an important law be passed without debate in Parliament.

The writer said that the

government's action came as a shock to all journalists, prompting the Press Association Board members to resign en masse and the political parties to back the journalists' protests.

It took the government, in conjunction with the press association, almost a whole year in 1982 to formulate the press and publications law, because of its importance and its effect on the political life in Jordan but, acting alone, the government took a few hours to introduce amendments that are bound to cause a drastic change in that law, according to the writer.

Al Ra'i Arabic daily discussed the Turkish invasion of northern Iraq, urging the Arab states to adopt a unified stand vis-à-vis this invasion and prevent further attacks in the future.

The paper said that Turkey's invasion is bound to bring the whole region to the verge of explosion and could trigger a regional conflict. It said that Israel, which recently concluded a military alliance with Turkey, might be involved in this invasion

which serves its purpose.

The invasion is designed to involve Syria in a confrontation with the Israeli and Turkish armed forces and keep Iraq a weak entity, prone to foreign domination, especially from its neighbours.

The paper said that the Arab countries are duty bound to rally behind Iraq and foil the Israeli-Turkish designs.

Oreih Rintawi, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the U.S.-Israeli-backed Turkish invasion of northern Iraq is bound to prompt the countries of the region to form regional alliances and escalate tensions of new, dangerous proportions.

The writer said that the invasion of northern Iraq could be a new American-Israeli plot to besiege Syria and Iran and prevent the Arabs from seeking an end to Israel's occupation of Syrian and Lebanese territories.

He said that the invasion has so far prompted Syria, Iran and Egypt to close their ranks and could prompt these countries to realign with Iraq in order to confront the conspiracy.

Features

Tense time on death row as execution pace accelerates

By Michael Graczyk
The Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — Death row inmate Carl Napier, who murdered three people 11 years ago on a houseboat, is not happy about the rate of executions in Texas these days.

"It's pretty depressing because we can see there's nothing there in the way of appeals," Napier said. "It used to be you'd have a big list of names and there might be one or two on the whole list actually be executed. Now, they're going right down the row and killing every one."

Beginning May 19, four people are to be executed on four consecutive days in a state that is far and away the most active for capital punishment in the United States. The current flurry hasn't been lost on many of the 454 inmates who call death row home, especially longtime prisoners who realise their days are numbered. An unprecedented number of their fellow inmates have been or will be strapped down for lethal injection.

"I try not to think about it," said Larry White, scheduled to die May 22 for strangling and stabbing a woman with a screwdriver 20 years ago in Houston. "We do all the time talk about it. But we can't do anything about it."

This week's executions will bring to seven the number of people put to death this month, with at least eight more planned in June.

That would push Texas' total for the year to 23,

eclipsing the record 19 injections for all of 1995 and topping any of the years between 1924 and 1965 when condemned prisoners were strapped to "old sparky," the state's electric chair.

Since the death penalty resumed in 1982, Texas has carried out 118 executions. Paving the way for faster executions was a recent Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ruling that upheld a state law designed to speed up appeals.

The law altered the timetables and deadlines for inmate appeals, and was expected to cut two to three years off the average 10-year state appeal process.

A legal challenge to the law virtually halted executions last year. Appeals delayed because of the challenge, along with cases which have exhausted appeals this year, have combined to produce this year's spurt.

Lawyer Jim Harrington of the Texas Civil Rights Project criticised the ruling at the time, saying it made it more likely that innocent people would be put to death.

"It makes it easier to execute people and takes away a safeguard that's historically been there to protect people against wrongful execution," he said.

Inmates were surprised at the result.

"Because so few happened last year, people here relaxed," said Jim Beathard, who is awaiting death for the 1984 slaying of a 14-year-

old boy, one of three members of a family killed in a scheme to collect insurance benefits.

"We used to look at a long list and see which guys might go," Beathard said. "Now we look at a list and see if any of them won't."

"They are moving more rapidly and efficiently," Napier is angry about it. "It's frustrating, devastating," he said. "Some people block it out, but they're in a fantasy world. We need some support in the free world."

There appears to be little help on the horizon in Texas. Public opinion polls show broad support for the death penalty and politicians run for office with tough-on-crime campaigns. Legis-

lators have moved to expand the crimes eligible for death sentences and some states like New York that did not have the death penalty now do.

In Huntsville, executions draw meagre numbers of anti-death penalty demonstrators. Relatives allowed to watch the killer of their loved ones die routinely complain about how long it takes to carry out the punishment.

Beathard said inmates feel as if no one is trying to stop them from being put to death.

"The public right now is more intent on revenge that they thinly disguise as justice," Beathard said. "That's evidence of a poorly educated public. There's not much hope out there."

'Though the roads leading up the mountain are many, the moon we see is just one' — Japanese view of religions

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

TOKYO — Once a year several Muslim and non-Muslim Japanese come together to experience an Islamic day. On this day they practise the teachings of Islam, said Khaled M. Hiuchi, director of the Japanese Muslim Association.

The event, which is organised by the association, attracts a large number of Japanese who show interest in experiencing the Islamic way of life.

Mr. Hiuchi, who converted to Islam 35 years ago, said that although Islam is not a familiar religion to the Japanese, although "the Japanese, or their majority, only know that Muslim countries export oil to Japan, and despite negative international propaganda which portrays Muslims as terrorists and fundamentalists, a large number of Japanese are interested to learn about Islam."

Mr. Hiuchi said that "on the Islamic day, we teach the Muslims and their close, non-Muslim friends,

relatives and others who are interested in Islam, how to pray five times a day."

"We also explain to them what ablation is, teach them how to read the Koran, serve Muslim meals and hold question and answer lectures," he added.

Abu Baker Morimoto, a Japanese scholar wrote in his book "Islam in Japan" that "if Islam comes to Japan in its original form and principle, leaving aside the peculiar manners and customs as may be found deep-rooted in the Muslim countries mixed with the local traditions which are their national ones, then Japan is a rich soil for the culture of Islam."

Although the two major religions in Japan are Shinto, with 117 million followers, and Buddhism, with 90 million followers, Article 20 of the Japanese Constitution guarantees religious freedom.

"Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organisation shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority," the article stipulates.

The director of the Islamic Centre Japan, Omar Khan, said that "there is no discrimination whatsoever against Japanese Muslims" which stand at 50,000. "The Japanese can practise Islamic worshipping and Japanese women can wear the veil if they wish," he added.

Non-Japanese Muslims residing in Japan are around 200,000, according to Mr. Khan.

Proof of lack of discrimination, he added, is the fact that there are a number of Japanese diplomats, as well as a former member of Parliament, that are Muslim. "People are not prosecuted if they convert to Islam," he said.

The Japanese Buddhist Association will be holding a religious summit in August and the Islamic Centre will be inviting eight Muslim thinkers, said Mr. Hiuchi.

Islam was introduced in Japan only 70 years ago. The first contact was when, in 1890, Ottoman Turkey despatched a naval vessel to Japan on a mission of goodwill. The mission

opened the way for establishing diplomatic relations between Japan and the Ottoman Empire.

As the ship was returning from its mission it was wrecked. The Japanese collected donations for the families of the dead and two Japanese men went to Turkey to present the donations. In Turkey, in the year 1891, they converted to Islam. Upon their return to Japan they started propagating Islam.

Currently, international marriages are the main reason behind converting to Islam in Japan, said Mr. Hiuchi. The society, he said, respects a hard-working, honest, well-mannered person and "once they get to know the religion of this person, some feel compelled to convert to Islam."

In Japan it is not surprising to find a Buddhist father, a Christian mother and a Muslim son or daughter, said Mr. Hiuchi.

"Diverse religions are spread throughout the country and no one imposes his or her beliefs on the other," he added. "My wife and I are Mus-

lims, but our children have the right to choose their own religion," he said.

Since religions, even within the same family, could be so diverse, some customs, like for instance burial, could prove less easy to adopt. "The association finds it difficult to convince the family of a deceased Muslim to bury him in accordance with Islamic practices," said Mr. Hiuchi.

"The deceased are normally cremated in Japan," he said, adding that due to the inability to keep contact with all Muslims, "sometimes we find out too late about one's death and cannot bury him accordingly."

"The Japanese outwardly do not show any negative response toward any religion. They believe that God, Kani and Buddha coexist, and this belief is deep rooted. Though the roads leading up the mountain are many, the moon we see is just one. With this concept, the Japanese view all religions," reads a paragraph of Abu Baker Morimoto's book "Islam in Japan."

Bus tour finds different eastern attitudes to EU

By Janet McEvoy
Reuters

MARIBOR, Slovenia — In the northern Slovenian town of Maribor a young woman student climbs onto a double decker bus. She does not ask for a destination, but to see the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

The request may seem strange, but then this is no ordinary double decker bus.

Adorned in the blue and white stars of the rich Western bloc and with multilingual rock music blaring out, the high-tech Eurobus — web sites, CD roms and video screen on board — has come to tell Eastern Europeans what the EU has in store for them.

The student organisers of the Eurobus, which last week completed a four month tour of 30 Eastern European university cities spanning seven countries, stress their goal was not propaganda.

"We decided to put Europe on wheels to visit 30 cities, to visit the people who will be the future decision makers of Europe," Christian Mandl, one of the

student organisers told Reuters in Maribor.

By the time the bus rumbled home it had been visited by 30,000 people, given out eight tonnes of brochures about the EU and driven 20,000 km.

The tour, which took in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, concludes as the European Commission puts the finishing touches to assessments on how prepared 10 Eastern European countries are to join the EU.

The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have also applied for membership of the EU.

Student funding

The students put up one tenth of the cost of the trip themselves, financing most of the rest from corporate sponsors, and are resentful at the lack of enthusiasm shown by the EU executive for their initiative. The commission only chipped in when they parked the bus illegally outside its Brussels headquarters.

"The result is that a few young people put their money in the programme. They lost money, and the commission does not care," Mandl said. If the students who visited the bus from the seven countries showed a common interest, it lay in taking part in EU educational exchange programmes, he explained, although there was no wish to live permanently in the other EU countries.

"In 1989 when the Berlin wall fell people were afraid of masses of people coming to the West. It's not true because people want to stay in their country and to contribute to the development of the country. The best positions for them are at home," he said.

If they demonstrated a common fear it was of losing their cultural identity and language once members of the giant EU bloc, he said. But otherwise attitudes from country to country differed.

"We saw that the situation is very different from one country to another," Mandl said. If students in Maribor hardly batted an eye at the sight of the bus, it is because after breaking free of the old Yugoslavia

Slovenians are in no hurry to join another grouping, Slovenian organiser Barbara Kobale explained.

"In a way they understand that they have to open sooner or later, but they don't want to lose their identity or the freedom they gained," she told Reuters in Maribor.

The picture could not have been more different in the countries seen as least likely to make the EU's first enlargement wave early next century — Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Slovak enthusiasm

In the eastern Slovakian town of Kosice more than 1,000 people besieged the bus, begging not to be left out of the European club and alienated even further from their former partner the Czech Republic, widely expected to enter the EU in the first wave.

"I think that they are afraid of what will happen if the Czech Republic enters without Slovakia, that the EU will divide the Czech and Slovak people even more than before. They think that they should get in together," Mandl

said. If students in Maribor hardly batted an eye at the sight of the bus, it is because after breaking free of the old Yugoslavia

Sleaze could make Paris voters see red

PARIS (R) — While France's parliamentary election is mainly a battle about jobs, economics and who should be prime minister, the hot issue in Paris is sleaze.

Opinion pollsters say voter anger over a welter of party funding and sleaze scandals could push half of the capital's constituencies, long the political bastion of President Jacques Chirac, into the arms of the Socialist opposition.

One man has come to symbolise what critics say is wrong with the way Paris has been run: Jean Tiberi, a loyal if uncharismatic underling who took over from Mr. Chirac as mayor in 1995.

The 62-year-old politician of Corsican ancestry is under judicial investigation over the alleged payment of a fictitious salary to his wife Xavier by a local authority in the Paris region run by a fellow Gaullist.

Mr. Tiberi was president of the Paris Public Housing Authority during a period when, according to another current judicial probe, Mr. Chirac's conservative Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) Party received illicit funding through kickbacks on public housing contracts.

Dozens of building contractors and alleged intermediaries are under investigation in the case. The satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné revealed in 1995 that Mr. Tiberi's two children were living in luxury, city-renovated council flats although each owned an apartment on which they were collecting rent.

They have since moved out and the Paris public prosecutor has closed that case, ruling that Mr. Tiberi made no personal gain and therefore could not be prosecuted for conflict of interest.

Now Le Canard Enchaîné says it has discovered that Mr. Tiberi supporters have over the years registered some 3,000 to 4,000 voters in his constituency who do not live there.

Mr. Tiberi dismissed the accusation, saying he did not need the votes. His Socialist opponent, Lyne Cohen-Solal, has tried to challenge the electoral register in the courts, so far without success.

The Greens Party candidate, Yves Fremion Danet, has also

filed a civil lawsuit against persons unknown for "electoral fraud" over the alleged inflation of the voting register, forcing the public prosecutor to open an investigation.

The RPR lost control of six of the city's 20 districts in 1995 municipal elections a few weeks after Mr. Chirac became president in a vote seen as a backlash against the granting of city-owned flats to dozens of political cronies.

Now polling institutes say it could lose up to 11 of the city's 21 parliamentary seats, possibly including the one held by Justice Minister Jacques Toubon, who sent a helicopter to scout the Himalayas for a holidaying public prosecutor last year in an unsuccessful bid to save the Tiberis from being probed.

Socialist leader Lionel Jospin hit out at sleaze in his main election rally in the capital, telling 5,000 young people: "Corruption, scandals and covert funding networks... have turned Paris since 1977 into the exclusive property of the few. The 'City of Light' has become the capital of the opaque."

Few Gaullist candidates want to be seen with Mr. Tiberi, and the party has avoided staging public rallies in the capital at which Prime Minister Alain Juppe would have had to share a platform with the mayor, RPR sources said. Facing a record 28 challengers in his constituency, the mayor has dodged the media while campaigning discreetly in the well-to-do fifth district around the Sorbonne University.

His press attaché said journalists had been unfair to him and he did not want them chasing him through the bustling street markets of his Latin Quarter constituency.

An opinion poll published last week suggested that Mr. Tiberi, a parliamentarian since 1968, would be forced into a runoff for the first time but would beat Ms. Cohen-Solal on the second round.

"I am proud to participate in the Socialists' combat against the RPR system which has long been established in Paris," the Socialist candidate told Reuters.

Asked how it felt to fight such a well-entrenched incumbent, she said: "This may

sound surprising but it's not so difficult, because people are well informed and they have heard about the scandals involving elected officials in Paris."

A star-studded support committee headed by former justice minister and constitutional court President Robert Badinter, and including writers Jean Lacouture, Yves Simon and Tahar Ben Jelloun and film director Constantin Costa Gavras are campaigning for her.

But they face the weight of middle-class residents for whom Mr. Tiberi has been a caring mayor always anxious to do favours for his constituents.

"The Tiberi system is based on patronage. But that's true of many other members of parliament," said a local insider.

Mr. Chirac has stood by Mr. Tiberi despite widespread calls for his removal, acutely aware that his successor is carrying the can for the system the president put in place in 18 years as mayor.

Mr. Tiberi's only notable innovation in two years in office has been the creation of cycle lanes on the city's clogged streets and a plan, not yet implemented, to restrict traffic when air pollution exceeds safety limits.

Interviewed at a brisk walk after he visited a bread festival outside Paris city hall, Mr. Tiberi insisted his campaign was going normally and deflected questions about sleaze.

"The Socialists, who have done France so much harm, especially with scandals such as the Urba affair, are ill placed to teach anyone lessons in morality," the mayor said.

Attacks on him were "a miserable political manoeuvre to distract attention from everything the Socialists did for 14 years, their economic, social and moral failure, not to mention things like telephone tapping," Mr. Tiberi said.

Asked whether he felt abandoned by his own political friends, he said: "Absolutely not, on the contrary. I have more support than ever."

"I feel calm and relaxed," the tease-looking mayor added before escaping back into the safety of city hall while his bodyguards barred access to journalists.

Snap French vote may be barrier to women

DEUIL-LA-BARRE, France (R) — The youngest female candidate for the opposition Socialist Party, Delphine Mayrargue grumbles that France's snap parliamentary election stacks the odds against a big breakthrough for women.

"We've been caught out because we have to campaign very quickly when we expected the election next year," 29-year-old Mayrargue said as she handed out leaflets beside a market in Deuil-la-Barre, north of Paris.

Almost no one seemed to know who she was.

The May 25-June 1 vote will test quotas of women candidates introduced by the Socialists and Communists in a drive to raise women's clout in parliament, where they held just 5.5 per cent of the seats, the lowest in the European Union.

France even lags behind nations like Mongolia, Algeria or Honduras.

About 30 per cent of the Socialist and Communist candidates are women. Like Mayrargue, many are young and contesting a national assembly seat for a first time.

Many were selected just weeks before President Jacques Chirac called the vote last month, almost 10 months ahead of schedule, giving

them little chance to get known locally.

"The early election was obviously aimed partly to cut the ground from under the Socialists and therefore the party's young and female candidates," Ms. Mayrargue said as shoppers carrying bags or baguettes passed by, often declining her leaflets.

Many politicians in the ruling centre-right coalition dismiss the left's bevy of women candidates as a gimmick, saying they are contesting right-wing bastions rather than marginal seats where they might have a chance of victory.

All agree a British-style surge of women members of parliament looks unlikely. Women doubled their share of the seats in the 659-member British House of Commons (lower house) to 120 when Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party swept away 18 years of Conservative rule on May 1.

Ms. Mayrargue said she was encouraged by Mr. Blair's victory. But she has not even had time to move home to her Val d'Oise constituency since she was selected in February to challenge a long-term incumbent from Chirac's centre-right coalition.

She lives in central Paris and works in a town hall in a

southern suburb on the opposite side of the city — risking a label as a "parachutist" out of touch with local issues.

"I wouldn't say people are fired up about Socialist ideas. But they are interested in my candidacy," she said in an interview outside the market, which sells everything from goat cheese to oysters.

Mr. Chirac called the vote saying France needed a "new elan" and to enter a single European currency from a position of strength. Polls show left and right running almost neck-and-neck, although the coalition is projected to win a reduced majority of seats.

"It'll be hard for her to get elected here," said Camille Fer, an 82-year-old pensioner shopping in the Deuil-la-Barre market where Ms. Mayrargue was campaigning.

"It's easier for the Socialists to field women candidates, because they don't have to make men give up existing seats in parliament," he said.

In the last election in 1993, Ms. Mayrargue's Socialist predecessor failed to win the 12.5 per cent of the vote needed to reach a run-off round, which was between a conservative and an extreme-right national front candidate.

All parties agree that some-

thing has to be done about women's lack of political and economic power — no woman heads any of the country's top 200 firms. But they cannot agree what.

France has had one woman prime minister, Socialist Edith Cresson, who ruled for a scant 10 months ending in 1992 with her popularity at a record low.

Yet the weak role of women in politics is an anomaly. Polls show that Martine Aubry, a former Socialist labour minister, and centrist Simone Veil, a former health minister and Nazi death camp survivor, are among France's most respected politicians.

"Women in France have always had too much to do — at home with the children or grand-children," lamented 70-year-old Marie Clement, wheeling her grand-daughter in a pram in the Deuil-la-Barre market.

"Men just put their feet up when they come home from work."

Ms. Mayrargue's campaign leaflets accuse the centre-right of calling the vote to stifle sleaze scandals and to pave the way to a new round of austerity. She says she will work to cut noise from nearby noisy airport and improve transport and hospitals. Both Mr. Chirac

and opposition Socialist leader Lionel Jospin have promised to give women a bigger political role.

Mr. Chirac wrote in a newspaper column last week: "I personally commit myself to do everything to let them take part fully in the economic and political life of France. It's a question of the harmony and efficiency of our society."

Mr. Jospin replied in a similar article that France should "raise — in deeds and not in words — the number of women in the national assembly."

Women are wary of promises by the centre-right after Prime Minister Alain Juppe named a record 12 women to his cabinet in 1995, 30 per cent of all ministers, only to sack eight of them in a reshuffle later that year.

Calling French democracy top-sided, Mr. Juppe said in March he personally favoured "positive discrimination" and an experiment with quotas for women in regional, municipal and European Parliament elections.

But when he delivered a keynote speech to coalition leaders launching his election campaign in a Paris conference hall last month, there were 30 men and just two women on the stage.

Representatives from 16 Arab states to attend major Jordanian fair

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the Patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, Jordan's industries exhibition will be inaugurated in Amman this month with the participation of 127 local industrial firms. Khalidoun Abu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry said Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference, Mr. Abu Hassan said that representatives from 16 Arab countries will attend the one-week exhibition, scheduled to be held on May 27. He added that businessmen are expected to hold talks with their Arab counterparts on trade cooperation and ways to remove obstacles on flow of goods and movement of individuals among Arab countries.

Mr. Abu Hassan did not rule out signing contracts with visiting Arab delegations.

Mr. Abu Hassan told reporters that the exhibition was aimed at demonstrating the progress achieved by the Kingdom in the past 50 years in the fields of textile, medicine, cement, food, engineering and plastic, furniture, leather, phosphate, potash, chemical fertilizers and other industries.

He also said a seminar, entitled "Obstacles in Arab Economic Cooperation," will be held during the exhibition.

Mr. Abu Hassan said about 130 businessmen from Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Oman, Lebanon, Yemen and Libya will participate.

More Arab countries are expected to attend, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

The industry chief said Jordan's industries contribute 22 per cent of the gross domestic products (GDP) and employ around 150,000 workers in 24,000

factories all over the Kingdom.

In 1996, Jordan industrial firms exported JD1 billion of industrial products to nearly 107 countries. Of this amount, 47 per cent went to Arab countries.

In the past five years, capital of new industrial firms in the private sector reached JD613 million. The assets of Jordanian firms are estimated at JD2 billion. Meanwhile, a source at the Amman Chamber of Industry said that Jordan and Iraq are about to conclude an agreement to increase a trade protocol between the two countries by \$50 million.

The source, who asked not to be named, said that the hike of the \$255 million protocol, which envisages supplying Iraq with food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies, was discussed during a recent visit by Iraqi officials to the Kingdom, including a visit

by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh earlier this month. The source did not elaborate.

Last week, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told a gathering of businessmen that Jordan was considering to increase the trade protocol, signed in 1992. But he added that any increase should be "thoroughly discussed between the two countries." He did not give more details.

During the press conference, Mr. Abu Hassan said that during a visit to Baghdad last week by a six-man delegation representing the Chamber of Industry, the team discussed with Iraqi officials increasing the protocol but added that any possible increase would take in consideration expanding the list of goods allowed to be exported to Iraq to cover more Jordanian-made products.

New Iran president faces tough challenge

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's next president will inherit an oil-dependent and inflation-ridden economy still struggling to find equilibrium nearly a decade after the end of a devastating eight-year war with Iraq.

Iranian voters who went to the polls Friday to choose the successor to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani did not need to be told about macroeconomic policy and International Monetary Fund guidelines to know that the economy is sick.

How quickly the new president can provide a remedy to rising prices and unemployment within the confines of the country's existing five-year plan (1995-2000) is left open to question.

Two positive legacies from Mr. Rafsanjani are that foreign debt, which soared to more than \$30 billion in the early 1990s, has been controlled and the economy, thanks to rising oil prices, posted growth of 4.5 per cent in the last Iranian year to March.

Rare IMF praise for an Iranian leader came in December when officials said Iran had successfully weathered the debt crunch and could look forward to more growth and new lines of credit.

And in April IMF Man-

aging Director Michel Camdessus said he was satisfied with Iranian economic policy and praised Tehran for reviving growth and bringing inflation down. Inflation is officially put at 25 per cent from 50 per cent two years ago.

But save for the \$18 billion or so in annual oil earnings, Iran is vulnerable with a crippled industrial sector and an ailing non-oil export sector dependent on stagnant sales of Persian carpets and pistachio nuts to bring in hard currency.

At current rates of production, Iran has enough oil reserves to last it more than 70 years, analysts said.

"We are not successful in exports," is how presidential candidate and parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri summed it up in a televised interview Wednesday.

Bureaucracy and unclear tax rules are common complaints by Iranian and foreign business people alike.

"Industry is bust, privatization has stalled and there is no proper managerial class," said one Iranian industrialist.

The vast petrodollars earned by the world's third biggest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia and Norway

are the economy's and the government's saving grace, but they make Iran open to volatile international oil prices.

The next president's grip on reforming the economy will to a large degree be shaped by what happens on the major oil trading floors in New York and London and whether Washington carries out its threat to slap sanctions on non-U.S. firms that invest in Iran's oil and gas sector, analysts said.

Oil prices have dived to \$18 a barrel from \$24 in early 1997 but expected higher petroleum demand next winter could give the new president a revenue boost in his first few months in office.

Critical to Iran's plans to attract foreign investment will be a \$3.5 billion project to get a foreign consortium to develop its huge South Pars gas field, which will be the backbone of Tehran's quest to be a major gas exporter by the next decade.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said this week the contract — which would represent the largest single foreign investment in Iran since 1979 — would go to a group led by French oil firm Total.

The French government has repeated this week that it will not deter Total's bid

and has said U.S. sanctions aimed at halting foreign energy investment in Iran are not lawful.

Behind the price and politics of oil lies serious domestic economic ills that need to be addressed.

Unemployment is officially put at 10 per cent, but this disguises underemployment. Many workers have to take on at least two jobs to keep up with 25 per cent inflation and annual state salary increases of only 10 per cent.

"I have to work in two jobs for 16 hours a day, six days a week just to pay my rent and pay for food. How am I going to save for a car or get married?" said one Tehran man who splits his day between working as a civil servant and in a shop.

Mr. Rafsanjani's bid to privatize bloated state-run industries has stalled, attempts to unify Iran's dual exchange rate have failed and the country has now emerged as the world's largest wheat importer to feed its growing population.

Heavy state subsidies have led to waste, and farmers have found it more lucrative to feed livestock with their wheat than to sell it at a state-fixed price to the government.

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Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6354	0.6120	1.4015	115.74	1.3745	1.9367	1.9367	5.8995
DE Mark	0.6096	1.0000	0.4366	0.8336	63.55	0.8112	1.1232	1.1232	3.3662
GB Sterling	1.6339	2.7815	1.0000	2.2036	163.34	2.3458	2.7141	2.7141	8.3101
CH Franc	0.7135	1.2674	0.4361	0.8256	1.0000	1.1888	1.4338	1.4338	4.3201
JP Yen	0.0006	1.4618	0.5282	1.2099	1.1888	1.4338	1.4338	1.4338	4.3201
CA Dollar	0.7275	1.2409	0.4443	0.8400	1.19	1.2221	1.4004	1.4004	4.1986
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0182	0.3967	0.8040	1.4417	0.8240	1.1140	1.1140	3.4170
NL Guilder	0.0035	0.6096	0.2215	0.4415	0.8224	0.7224	0.7224	0.7224	2.2045
FR Franc	0.1755	0.2970	0.1073	0.2150	0.2410	0.2410	0.2410	0.2410	0.7224

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP	YEN
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6354	0.6120	1.4015	115.74	1.3745	1.9367	1.9367	5.8995
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	2.3072	0.3325	0.6417	0.4208	0.4208	0.4208	0.4208	1.2711
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.4366	1.0000	0.8336	0.6355	0.8112	1.1232	1.1232	3.3662
Bahrain Dinar	2.46	4.00	0.9488	1.80	0.8011	0.8011	0.8011	0.8011	2.40
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4545	0.1502	0.2902	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.2431
Kuwait Dinar	3.3113	5.4415	1.2483	2.46	1.216	1.216	1.216	1.216	3.648
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.4523	0.1502	0.2902	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.2431
Lebanese L1000	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006
Egyptian	0.2950	0.4889	0.1665	0.3112	0.2410	0.2410	0.2410	0.2410	0.7224

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Commodity	Unit	Price	Country	Unit	Price	Country	Unit	Price
Brent	20.00	20.50	SA Riyal	0.3668	0.4618	0.16319	0.37396	30.8971
W.Texa	21.35	21.35	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.40514	0.16064	0.39167	31.5408
Bonny	20.00	20.50	KW Dinar	3.3113	5.61167	0.202675	0.484468	383.563
Dubai	19.10	19.28	BH Dinar	0.3770	0.49435	1.62364	3.70234	307.314
UL Gas	200.00	207.00	CY Pound	1.9748	3.2441	1.2879	2.7677	228.506

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP	YEN
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4366	0.1502	0.2902	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.2431
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4523	0.1502	0.2902	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.2431
KW Dinar	3.3113	5.4415	1.2483	2.46	1.216	1.216	1.216	1.216	3.648
BH Dinar	0.2723	0.4523	0.1502	0.2902	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.0830	0.2431
CY Pound	1.9748	3.2441	1.2079	2.3677	0.7224	0.7224	0.7224	0.7224	2.2045

Main Equity Indices														
Country	Index	Price	Change	%	Country	Index	Price	Change	%	Country	Index	Price	Change	%
NewYork	DOW JONES	7256.05	37.92	0.52	7320.77	7258.78	7258.13	-0.09	-0.001	London	FT-SE 100	4651.18	46.51	1.01
NewYork	S&P 500	946.95	5.29	0.53	942.96	935.98	933.98	-2.00	-0.21	Tokyo	Nikkei 225	20099.0	131.61	0.65
London	FT-SE 100	4651.18	10	0.21	4672.7	4552.1	4651.18	81.08	1.78	Paris	CAC 40	2762.9	21.25	0.78
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	20099.0	131.61	0.65	20068.8	19907.7	19877.4	-31.1	-0.16	Frankfurt	DAX	3602.19	22.77	0.64
Paris	CAC 40	2762.9	21.25	0.78	2771.45	2742.01	2741.58	-0.43	-0.02					
Frankfurt	DAX	3602.19	22.77	0.64	3605.26	3584.29	3579.45	-24.97	-0.70					

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Rate	Currency	Rate	Currency	Rate	Currency	Rate	Currency	Rate
USD	5.55	DEM	5.55	GBP	5.55	JPY	5.55	CHF	5.55
FRF	5.55	ITL	5.55	ESP	5.55	YEN	5.55	EUR	5.55

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value
New York	7256.05	DOW JONES	37.82	0.52	7320.77	7259.78	7258.13		
New York	340.85	S&P 500	0.53	0.83	842.98	835.98	835.98		
London	4681.8	FT-SE 100	10	0.21	4672.7	4652.1	4651.8		
Tokyo	131.61	NIKKEI 225	131.61	0.65	20068.8	19907	19877.4		
Paris	2762.9	CAC 40	21.25	0.78	2771.45	2742.01	2741.68		
Frankfurt	3602.19	DAX	22.77	0.64	3605.36	3584.29	3578.42		

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Photographer Adams
- 6 Lars and Mars
- 10 Spade and Houston
- 14 "Doonee"
- 15 "no thrill"
- 16 Rocker Clapton
- 17 Leading part, in music
- 18 Singer McEntire
- 19 Josip Broz
- 20 Montana battlefield
- 23 Ars — artist
- 25 — Amin
- 26 Wall St. watchdog; abbr.
- 27 Edward Albee work
- 30 Silly ones
- 32 Ebon; abbr.
- 33 Variable star
- 34 Aspire
- 35 Genuine
- 37 Bottle parts
- 39 Western school letters
- 43 Suppositions
- 45 Great the villain
- 47 Chou En—
- 48 Madrid tourist stop
- 51 Small cake
- 53 Snigger's catch
- 54 What a thole
- 56 Geometric figures
- 57 Insignificant sum
- 61 Volume
- 62 Blueprint
- 63 "Entertain You"
- 66 British collar
- 67 Describe
- 68 Bakery workers
- 69 Finish the case
- 70 Montreal player
- 71 Spectral

by Ray Smith

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1997

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Carefully schedule your time and activities today or you'll flounder about without accomplishing anything. Later this evening work on building your physical vitality and health so that you can handle any situation.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This would be a wise time today to start economizing while you look around for more lucrative channels for your career activities to shine. Be prudent and make small repairs at home at this time or big ones in the days ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Remain optimistic today even if conditions around you look bleak, you should be tactful. Any display of temper around your friends later this evening could alienate them very quickly, so be cautious.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You should not jump to any erroneous conclusions today as a result of envy. The person you're jealous of is bragging about nothing, so you should keep your cool. Keep poised with your mate and show him or her kindness.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are bound and determined today to obtain a wish at any price, however, wait for a better time or you will notice some difficulty. Usually reliable friends may seem distant to you later this evening, however, be tactful and thoughtful.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Avoid a higher-up at this time who may be in an irate mood and looking for a "tripping" day. Don't take anyone's criticism this evening with your credit for career or could regret the situation. Rest up after a hard day.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Keep in mind today that the grass only appears greener on the other side of the fence. You should not be listening to that person who's been trying to get you out of the way in the days ahead.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Although the career activities may not seem appealing today, you've put it off too long already, get to it and stop procrastinating. Don't try later this evening to force your views on others.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Try to be sympathetic and helpful today concerning any grievances a fellow associate may have. Any contracts should be followed conscientiously, thereby avoiding any difficulties. Be true to your word.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may have the "Monday blues," today, however, get right to career activities and your mood will change. Don't be critical of a fellow associate who is in the same state of mind and thereby quite helpful.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Business before pleasure today should be your motto, so keep to your ideals. Don't put off important matters, which can't wait. Be sure to control your temper with others later this evening, and be thoughtful of your mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Tempers are short today, so try to be cooperative with your loved ones and thereby cooler heads will prevail. It would be best to postpone visits from guests until a later time, of difficulties will ensue.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Bulls get low-scoring win over Heat

CHICAGO (R) — Michael Jordan shook off three horrible quarters to score 14 points in the final 6:27 and the Chicago Bulls cranked up the defence to beat the Miami Heat 75-68 Thursday in the lowest scoring NBA playoff game ever.

The win, which gave the defending champion Bulls a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals, replaced a 74-71 game between Syracuse and Fort Wayne on April 7, 1955 as the lowest-scoring in NBA playoff history.

Game 3 is Saturday afternoon in Miami. Jordan, who once scored 63 points by himself in a playoff game, was 2-of-12 from the field and had only nine points just before the midpoint of the fourth quarter. But he finished with 23 by dominating the game's crucial moments, from the field and at the free-throw line.

"I played like doo-doo," said Jordan. "It's simple. I made some free throws down the stretch. Other than that they did it without me tonight. I missed some easy shots. It was an ugly performance by me. It wasn't pretty basketball but at least we got out of here with two wins."

Scottie Pippen also had 23 points for Chicago, which shot just 35 per cent (23-of-64) from the field.

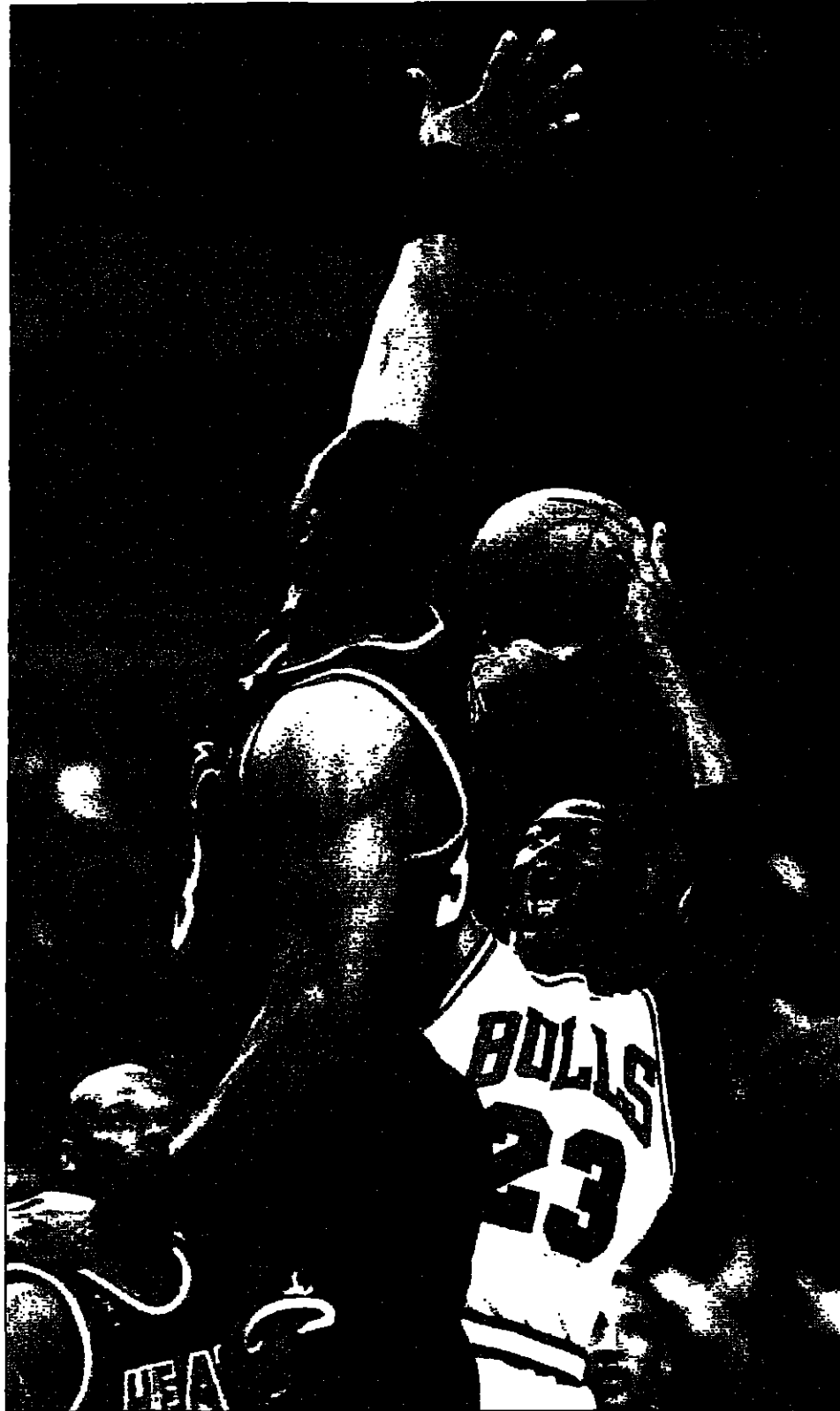
"I got off to a good early start," said Pippen. "If you take that away, I played as lousy as anyone else. You have to realise that (Miami's Pat) Riley has coached against this triangle (offence) many times. He knows how to take the ball out of Michael's hands."

"No matter how physical it gets, we have to play our game. The important thing is that we are winning."

"There is not much good to say about this game, except that we won," said Bulls coach Phil Jackson. "I told them after three quarters that whoever scored 14 points would have a chance to win the game. Bad shooting has just been the tone of the series."

Tim Hardaway had 15 points and Alonzo Mourning 14 for Miami, which hit just 33 per cent (25-of-74) from the floor.

"If we can get the same type of shots we got tonight in Miami, I'll be happy," Riley said. "We got some



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan (R) gets a shot off as Miami Heat's Alonzo Mourning (L) defends in the second quarter of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals game in Chicago. Chicago won 75-68 and leads the best-of-seven series 2-0 (Reuters photo)

good looks, we just didn't make the shots. Both teams are playing very well defensively."

The game also saw the lowest scoring first half in playoff history. Chicago led 39-29 at the break, and the 68 combined points were one fewer than the New York Knicks and New Jersey Nets produced on April 29, 1994.

In the first half, Jordan managed just seven points on 1-of-7 shooting.

The Heat pulled within a basket on several occasions in the third quarter but were unable to take the lead. They trailed 45-43 with 3:27 left in the period, but Jamal Mashburn missed a 3-point shot. After a Chicago turnover, Mourning missed a driving layup that would have knotted the contest. After Mourning's miss, Jordan penetrated but dished off to Pippen, who buried a 3-point shot for a 48-43 lead. The Heat were unable to get closer than four feet of the quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the Heat drew within 55-54 on a 3-point shot by Dan Majerle with 6:30 to go in the game. The Bulls called time-out and, on their first possession after the break, Pippen threw up a wild 3-point attempt.

But Jordan, who finished with nine rebounds, came up with the loose ball and laid it back in for a three-point advantage.

Isaac Austin hit a reverse layup in the key to bring

Miami within 57-56 but Pippen answered by draining a pair of free throws with 5:29 to go. Austin hit an 11-foot turnaround jumper with Dennis Rodman all over him to again bring Miami within a point.

But Jordan hit a clutch 17-footer with 4:45 to play, pushing the lead back to 61-58. The Heat misfired again at the offensive end and Jordan grabbed the rebound and was fouled. He made both free throws for a five-point lead, then got a steal and penetrated into the key as the Heat defenders collapsed on him.

Jordan dished the ball to a wide-open Ron Harper, who buried a 3-point shot to give Chicago a 66-58 lead.

After a free throw by Hardaway brought Miami within seven, Jordan hit two more free throws and the Heat never drew any closer than five feet of the way.

Chicago got just nine points on 3-of-13 shooting from its bench as Toni Kukoc, Brian Williams and Steve Kerr combined for four points.

Thursday's playoff result
Eastern Conference finals
Chicago 75 Miami 68
(Chicago leads best-of-seven series 2-0)

Wednesday's playoff result
Western Conference finals
Utah 104 Houston 92
(Utah leads best-of-seven series 2-0)

Irish Silence in Belmont Stakes

ELMONT, New York (R) — Trainer Leo O'Brien announced Thursday that he will enter Irish Silence in the \$500,000 Belmont Stakes.

The announcement came one day after captain Bodgit, who finished second at the Kentucky derby and third in the Preakness behind double winner Silver Charm, was forced to retire due to an injury in his front left leg.

Irish Silence has two wins and two second-place finishes in eight career starts.

"Austin wants to try the Belmont, and we're both hoping this one is good enough to take a shot," said O'Brien about the June 7 race.

O'Brien added that John Velazquez or Frank Lovato, Jr. would be the jockey. Irish Silence is the first New York-bred horse to be confirmed for this year's Belmont.

Spain reign on clay as G go down in World Team

DUESSELDORF (R) — Albert Costa and Felix Mantilla both posted straight-set wins as Spain sped to victory over Germany at the World Team Cup on Thursday.

Cold, rainy conditions twice delayed play three hours and forced the postponement of the doubles, but failed to cool off the red-hot Spaniards who have dominated on clay this season.

A Spaniard has filled 14 of the 28 semifinal spots in seven European clay court events this season, winning four.

That domination has been in evidence at the world team cup.

In two ties Spain have yet to lose a match and dropped just two sets, leaving them top of the blue group standings with a perfect 2-0.

Although Mantilla's match took most of the day to complete, after it was interrupted midway through the first set, he spent little time on court crushing David Prinosil 6-2 6-1 in 41 minutes.

With rain continually threatening his match,



Michael Stich

Costa made quick work of Michael Stich, disposing of the 1991 Wimbledon champion 6-1 6-3 in exactly one hour.

"The long wait was difficult but you get used to it, you just have to try and be patient and keep your concentration," said Costa, world ranked 13th.

Immediately after the match, Stich said he would not play at the French Open, joining a growing list of players to drop out of the Grand Slam event starting on Monday.

Stich, who lost in the final

of la to Ye a na had point almo tive. In tie, Neth other Ma Swee defe 6-3 Bu elled 2 7- nine

French Open milestones

PARIS (AFP) — The first French Open was played in 1891 — 14 years after Wimbledon was created, ten years after the first United States Open, and 14 years before the first Australian Open. But non-French players did not compete in the tournament until 1925.

Played originally at the Paris Stade Francaise and then, on alternate years, at the Croix-Catelan Racing Club, the French championships moved to the current Roland Garros Stadium close to the Porte D'auvergne just west of the capital in 1928.

The new stadium, named after First World War aviation hero Roland Garros, was built in less than a year and the first champions in the new arena were Frenchman Henri Cochet and American Helen Wills-Moody.

Tournament milestones:
•1930-Helen Wills-Moody wins third consecutive women's singles title.

•1932-Frenchman Henri Cochet becomes the first player to win the men's singles title three times.

•1934-Gottfried von Cramm becomes the first German player to win the men's singles title.

•1937-German Hilde Sperling captures her third consecutive women's singles title.

•1938-American Donald Hedge wins the men's singles title and goes on to notch up the first-ever "Grand Slam" while Simone Mathieu of France finally wins the women's singles crown after losing in six finals.

•1939-William McNeill beats Bobby Riggs in first-ever all-American men's final.

•1947-Hungarian Jozsef Asboth becomes the first east European player to win men's singles title. A junior men's singles event is included in tournament programme for the first time.

•1951-Czech Jaroslav Drobný wins the men's event at a fourth attempt after three unsuccessful appearances in the final.

•1953-Ken Rosewall of Australia, at 18 years 7 months, becomes the youngest-ever men's singles champion while American Maureen Connolly, at 18 years 8 months (and on her way to the first female "Grand Slam") becomes the youngest-ever winner of the women's crown.

•1954-Tony Trabert of the United States becomes the first player to win the men's singles title without losing a set.

•1962-an "all-Australian" year. Rod Laver (on his way to his first "Grand Slam") recovers from two sets down to beat fellow-Australian Roy Emerson for the men's singles title, while Margaret Court sees off compatriot Lesley Turner in the women's event.

•1966-Hungarian Istvan Gulyas accepts a delay of 24 hours before coming out to play in the men's singles final to allow Australian opponent Tony Roche time to recover from an ankle injury. Roche wins the title.

•1968-The tournament becomes the first Grand Slam event to go "open". Australian Ken Rosewall beats Rod Laver to become the oldest-ever singles champion at 33 years 7 months. The women's singles is won by Nancy Richey of the United States who beats Britain's Ann Haydon-Jones.

•1969-Rod Laver (about to succeed a second "Grand Slam") wins his second singles title.

•1970-Czech Jan Kodes beats Yugoslavia's Zeljko Franulovic in the shortest-ever men's final — 6-2, 6-4, 6-0 in just 68 minutes.

Margaret Smith-Court of Australia, on her way to her first "Grand Slam" takes women's title for a fourth time by out-playing Helga Niessen of Germany 6-2, 6-4.

•1971-Jan Kodes retains the men's title by beating Romanian Ilie Nastase, while Evonne Goolagong wins the women's singles in an all-Australian showdown with Helen Gourlay.

•1972-Andres Gimeno of Spain becomes the oldest winner of the men's singles crown at the age of 34 years 10 months.

1973-Inauguration of the tie-break does not stop the 1973 championships from being the longest-ever. Romanian Ilie Nastase beats Nikki Pilić of Yugoslavia in the men's final on the Tuesday of the third week after serious rain delays disrupted the tournament.

rupted the tournament.

•1974-trailing by two sets to love, Swedish newcomer Bjorn Borg came on to win the men's title. United States captures her first women's title by dropping a set.

•1976-Italian Adriano Panatta saw first-round before going on to win the time more than 100,000 spectators at.

•1981-Bjorn Borg wins second sixth session.

•1982-Mats Wilander of Sweden becomes the first Swedish man to win the men's singles title after losing a match against Jose Luis Clerc despite being ruled the point in his favour.

•1983-Yannick Noah becomes first men's singles crown since Marcel Beccant.

•1984-Extensions to the stadium bring petition courts to 17. Ivan Lendl beats man's title after trailing by two sets to love. Martina Navratilova all their way to a "Grand Slam".

•1986-Chris Evert wins women's title. More than 500,000 spectators attend it.

•1987-at the age of 17 years 11 months the youngest-ever women's champion.

•1988-Steffi Graf, who doesn't drop retains her women's title by routing Zvereva of the Soviet Union in the final.

•1989-Michael Chang becomes your pion at the age of 17 years 3 months by He is the first American to win the tit Sanchez-Vicario of Spain become women's champion at the age of 17 years.

•1990-Monica Seles takes over from Vicario as the youngest-ever women's 16 years 9 months while American Jen 2 months, becomes the youngest-ever men's singles both of the top seeds, B Edberg, are defeated in the first-round Left-handed veteran Andres Gomez from Ecuador to win a Grand Slam ti Agassi in the final.

•1991-While the tournament celebrates Agassi loses in the final for the second he is beaten by fellow-American Jim C

•1992-Monica Seles wins women's while Jim Courier retains the men's crown Petr Korica.

•1993-Sergi Bruguera becomes the first man's title in 21 years by dethroning Ji Steffi Graf wins her third singles crown

•1994-The year of the Spanish "dou the men's title by beating unorthodox Berasategui while Arantxa Sanchez-Vi women's singles crown by beating Frar final was completed on the second Sun early in the first set by rain on the Sat.

•1995-Thomas Muster, unbeaten becomes the first Austrian winner of defeats Michael Chang in the final. Six season injury worries, notches up her f crown by beating Arantxa Sanchez-Vic

•1996-Steffi Graf again beats San women's title when she scores a 6-3, 6- longest final in tournament history. Pl enthralled spectators, the final lasted 4 minutes. Yevgeny Kafelnikov becomes t the men's crown. The 22-year-old defe Germany 7-6 (7/4), 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) in : duel played on a sun-baked centre-cour

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHAHAF
A TAMAR HIRSCH
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DEFENDERS ARE ONLY HUMAN

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ Q J 8 6 3
♥ 4
♦ A K 4
♣ A K

WEST
♠ K 10 2
♥ 10 8 7 5 3
♦ 10 6
♣ Q 7 6

EAST
♠ A 9 7
♥ K 9 3
♦ J 9 7 2
♣ 5 4 3

SOUTH
♠ A 4
♥ A Q J 8
♦ Q 8 3
♣ J 10 8 8 2

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
Pass 1♣ Pass 1♠
2♣ Pass 2♠ Pass
3NT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♣

Study the diagram above. Would you choose to play or defend three no trump after West leads the five of hearts and East follows with the king? At the table, would the play to the first trick change your mind? Note that once North had shown at least nine cards in two suits, South didn't bother to introduce the hearts and, instead, rebid two no trump. North's sequence showed a better than minimum opening with

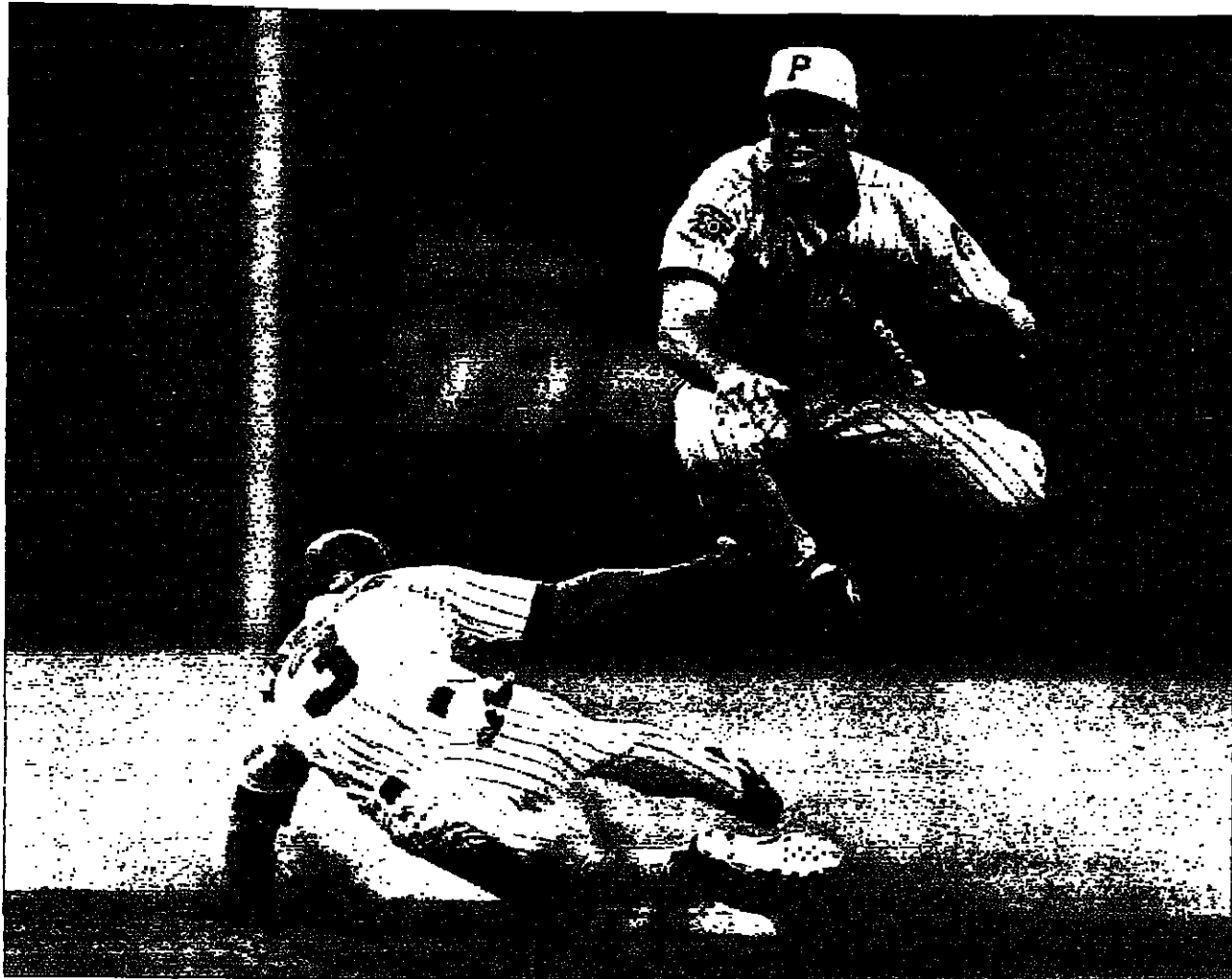
a six-card major (with a minimum and six spades, North would have rebid two spades immediately rather than introduce the four-card minor), so South had an easy rebid of three no trump.

Double dummy, you are correct if you choose to defend. There is only one entry left to the South hand and, since the queen of clubs does not drop doubleton and diamonds are not evenly divided, South will fall a trick short.

Alternatively, declarer can win the ace of hearts, cash the two winning hearts, discarding the ace and king of clubs from dummy, and lead the jack of clubs to set up the suit while the queen of diamonds is still in hand. But that enables the defenders to score two heart tricks, two spades and the queen of clubs for down one.

Nevertheless, in practice we would choose to play three no trump. When East plays the king of hearts at trick one, we would allow the monarch to hold! It would be inhuman of East not to return a heart. Now declarer can win the next two heart tricks, discarding the offending club honors from the North hand, and force out the queen of clubs. Since a high heart honor remains in the closed hand to control the suit, the defenders can come to no more than four tricks.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA "1" Pierce Brosnan & Linda Hamilton ... in DANTE'S PEAK Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:634144 PHILADELPHIA "2" Elisa Silverstone...in CLUELESS Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 PLAZA Mel Gibson...in RANSOM Shows: 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 Top Disney production 101 DALMATIANS Shows: 12:30, 5:00	CINEMA TEL:677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Winner of 9 Oscars THE ENGLISH PATIENT Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00 CONCORD "2" Michael Jordan...in SPACEJAM Shows: 3:30, 6:00	Nabil & Hisham TEL: 62
	The acto on annual The theat reopen July				



Pittsburgh Pirates' second baseman Joe Randa jumps to avoid Montreal Expos' Mike Lansing on the field during a game. Expos' Rondell White was safe at first on the play. Pittsburgh won 9-3 (Reuters photo)

Mets' Bobby Jones is first NL 8-game winner

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Bobby Jones became the national league's first eight-game winner and was one of three Mets with three hits as the New York Mets routed the Philadelphia Phillies 10-3 Thursday.

Jones (8-2) allowed three runs over seven innings on eight hits and a walk with three strikeouts in winning his fifth straight decision. He held Philadelphia to one run over the first five innings as the Mets, who have won nine of their last 12 games, built a 10-1 lead.

"It's definitely not something I expected, to have this many wins so soon," Jones said. "It's great to get off to a good start. I'm throwing the ball as well as I ever have. I'm very comfortable and I've had good location on all my pitches."

John Olerud, Edgardo Alfonzo and Jones played key roles in an eight-run third inning that broke open a tight game. Bernard Gilkey, Alex Ochoa and Rey Ordóñez added two hits apiece as the Mets banged out 15 hits against five Philadelphia pitchers. The win also moved New York four games over .500 for the first time since 1992.

"It's a fluke thing," added Jones of his hitting. "The ball just hit the bat. It's one of those things I guess."

Phillies ace Curt Schilling (6-4) was tagged for nine runs and nine hits in 2 2/3 innings, walking three and striking out three. His earned run average jumped from 3.18 to 4.13.

Schilling, who was pitching on just three hours' sleep after his wife gave birth to his first daughter, didn't blame the lack of rest for his performance.

"My pre-game routine was a little skewed, but I'm incredibly disappointed, because I felt good coming out of the pen," Schilling said.

"Every mistake I made they hit. I was ready to pitch and I thought it would be a pitchers' duel, but only one pitcher showed up."

Olerud got his ninth homer for New York while ex-Met Rico Brogna homered for Philadelphia.

In San Francisco, Mark Gardner allowed four hits over six innings en route to his sixth straight victory and J.T. Snow had a double and three RBI as the Giants beat the Colorado Rockies 7-2.

Gardner (6-1) allowed a pair of solo homers, walked three and struck out three in extending the longest winning streak of his career. The Giants have won seven of his last eight starts and his winning streak is the longest by a Giant since

Dave Burba's eight-game string in 1993.

"Pitching in big games I try not to change the way I pitch," Gardner said. "Every game is important. I just try to maintain composure and pitch my game."

Rich Rodriguez and Doug Henry combined to hold Colorado scoreless over the final three frames.

Colorado starter John Thomson (0-3) was tagged for four runs and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Ellis Burks and Jeff Reed got the Colorado homers.

In Montreal, Adrian Brown's first major-league homer, a three-run shot in the seventh inning, helped rally the Pittsburgh Pirates to a 9-3 victory over the Expos.

"I was sitting on a changeup all the way," said Brown, who was recalled from double-A Carolina last Friday. "The first two at-bats, he (Carlos Perez) threw me a fastball and then a change, so I was looking for it."

Added Brown: "Special, like a dream come true for me. I'll remember this one."

Joe Randa also homered for Pittsburgh while Darrin Fletcher and Mike Lansing had solo shots for Montreal.

Jon Lieber (2-5) broke his five-game losing streak and won for the first time in six starts since April 20. He allowed three runs and walked one with seven strikeouts in six innings as the Pirates posted their second straight win after a four-game losing streak.

Perez (4-4) lost his third straight decision and is winless since April 30. He gave up four runs and five hits with five walks and three strikeouts in 6 2/3 innings for Montreal, which suffered its third straight loss.

In San Diego, Joey Hamilton allowed one run over seven innings and hit his second career home run and Tony Gwynn added three hits as the Padres stopped the Los Angeles Dodgers 4-1 for their fourth straight victory.

Hamilton (3-1) allowed four hits, walked three and struck out five to notch his second straight win since returning from the disabled list last week. The right-hander's only mistake was Todd Zeile's leadoff homer in the second inning.

The four-game winning streak is the Padres' longest of the season. They also extended their win streak over Los Angeles to seven games.

Hideo Nomo (5-3) gave up four runs and eight hits over seven innings for the Dodgers, who have lost five straight for the first time since July 1995.

Red Sox beat Yankees 8-2; Rangers overcome A's

NEW YORK (R) — Will Cordero had five hits and Mike Stanley blasted a three-run homer as the Boston Red Sox pounded out 19 hits to beat the New York Yankees 8-2 on Thursday.

"It was a good win for us," Red Sox manager Jimmy Williams said. "The pitching and defense gave the opportunity for the offense to get on track."

Cordero had a double and three singles in his first five at-bats. He had a shot at a perfect 6-for-6 day, but Yankees third baseman Wade Boggs made a tough backhanded play on a grounder in the eighth inning to deny Cordero a six-hit game. He singled in the ninth.

Tim Lincecum was 4-for-6 for Boston, and Mo Vaughn had three hits, including a 430-foot solo homer into the upper deck in right.

New York's David Wells (4-3) lasted 5 1/3 innings and surrendered five runs and 12 hits.

The Red Sox snapped a three-game losing streak and won for only the second time in 12 games. The Yankees lost their fourth straight game.

"Baseball is a season of streaks and we'll get out of it," Yankees manager Joe Torre said. "We're being too tentative at the plate and taking too many pitches. We were a little spoiled in the

beginning. We were getting the hits when we needed them."

Paul O'Neill was 3-for-4 for the Yankees.

In Cleveland, Albie Lopez pitched seven strong innings and Manny Ramirez and Pat Borders had two-run singles in an eight-run fifth inning as the Cleveland Indians routed the Kansas City Royals 9-1 on Thursday.

Lopez, who has replaced the injured Jack McDowell in the rotation, has allowed just one run over 12 innings in winning his last two starts.

"The last two starts showed (manager) Mark

Hargrove what I can do," Lopez said. "I am used to being a starter my whole career. All I ever wanted to do was go out there every five days."

Kansas City has lost six straight games and has scored just one run in the last 20 innings.

The Indians (23-20) pounded Jose Rosado (3-3) for six runs and six hits in 4 1/3 innings and moved to three games over .500 for the first time this season.

"Guys are starting to get confidence in each other, not confidence in themselves, but with each other," Hargrove said. "We've been getting good pitching and

some timely hits."

At Texas, Juan Gonzalez homered twice and drove in five runs to power the Texas Rangers to a 10-7 victory over the Oakland Athletics.

John Burkett (3-3) pitched five ineffective innings but was credited with the win for Texas, which is 10-4 in its last 14 games.

American League

Cleveland	9	Kansas City	1
Boston	8	New York	2
Texas	10	Oakland	7

National League

San Francisco	7	Colorado	2
San Diego	4	Los Angeles	1
NY Mets	10	Philadelphia	3
Pittsburgh	9	Montreal	3

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Jordan to play Palestinian soccer team in Jericho June 6

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's national soccer team heads to the West Bank town of Jericho next month to play against their Palestinian counterparts in the first international soccer match since 1967, a spokesman for the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) said Friday.

Hisham Asfour, secretary of the JSF, said that the match with the Palestinian national soccer team will coincide with the inauguration of Jericho Stadium, scheduled to be on June 6.

Mr. Asfour told the Jordan Times that the lineup of the Jordanian team had not yet been decided but added that most of the national team players will be included. He did not elaborate.

He said that a Palestinian delegation, headed by Issa

Shou'ebi, secretary of the Palestinian Football Association, would arrive to discuss the arrangements for the June 6 match with JSF officials.

Mr. Asfour did not rule out holding matches with other Palestinian soccer clubs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the visit which will start on June 5.

In the past two years, Jordanian and Palestinian soccer teams exchanged visits and held several matches. Jordan's Al Wihdat and Al Faisali played several games in Gaza, Hebron and other cities.

No matches have so far been held between Jordanian and Israeli clubs. Mr. Asfour did not mention whether the national team was scheduled to play with Israeli teams during the visit.

In 1995 the Israeli Arab team of Kfar Kana, which included several Jewish players, visited the Kingdom and played against Al Wihdat and Al Faisali.

Makinen holds overnight lead in Rally of Argentina

CORDOBA, Argentina (R)

— Tommi Makinen, the reigning world champion, ended the first day of the rally of Argentina on Thursday at the head of a three-way fight for the lead with Briton Colin McRae and Spaniard Carlos Sainz chasing hard.

Makinen, of Finland, moved to the front of the event on the third stage and built a 12 second lead over his two main title rivals with the quickest time on the fourth, but then saw his advantage slowly chipped away through the remaining four stages of the day.

McRae, who set the fastest times on the sixth, seventh and eighth stages as the teams returned to their base in the city of Cordoba, north of Buenos Aires, was just eight seconds behind at the end of the opening leg.

Sainz had led the rally after the second stage, but after damaging his ford while driving through water on the third stage, he slipped down to third place before a spirited recovery saw him set the fastest time on the fifth stage and end the day 13 seconds behind Makinen.

Briton Richard Burns marked his impressive return to the championship with Mitsubishi by ending the day fourth overall, with former champion Juha Kankkunen, of Finland, fifth placed on his debut outing for the ford team.



Finnish Mitsubishi driver Tommi Makinen drives his car during the first leg of the XVII Argentine Motor Rally. Makinen, who heads the Worlds Drivers' Championship after six rounds, took the Argentine lead on the dusty third stage from Villalbertina to Ischillin to lead teammate Briton Richard Burns by seconds after the fourth stage (Reuters photo)

The huge local interest in the event caused chaos on the opening stages when spectators poured onto the rally route, forcing organisers to delay the running of the rally by more than an hour as they cleared them to safe viewing points.

The second leg of the rally, which runs to the west of Cordoba on Friday, is the longest of the event with 10 stages totalling 180 kilometres before the teams arrive back in Cordoba for their overnight halt.

Sydney hits back at IOC chief Samaranch

SYDNEY (R) — Sydney's top politician on Friday told Juan Antonio Samaranch to mind his own business after complaints by the International Olympic

Committee (IOC) chief over a proposed city hotel bed tax to help fund the 2000 Games.

New South Wales premier Bob Carr, whose state government is funding much of the massive construction costs involved in staging the Sydney games, said the bed tax was a local issue and had nothing to do with the IOC.

"Mr Samaranch runs the IOC. By all accounts he does an exemplary job," Carr told reporters.

"But we're building the Olympics. We're building the facilities and we're enti-

pled to say to the hotels in the cad (Central Business District): 'you'll make a contribution'."

Speaking in Monaco on Thursday, Samaranch said the IOC was unhappy over plans to impose a 10 percent bed tax, starting from September 1 this year, for hotels, motels and guests houses in central Sydney.

The tax is projected to raise AS\$64 million (US\$50.07 million) a year, offsetting a projected AS\$3.2 billion bill for building Olympic facilities, about two-thirds of which is being met from the public

purse.

"We are not happy with the tax and the hotels are also not happy," Samaranch said. "We can do nothing — only tell the organisers that we are not happy."

Several of Sydney's five-star hotels have joined forces in a campaign urging the government to scrap the proposed tax.

Overall, Sydney's budget and plans for the games were well received by the IOC and international sporting federations during meetings in Monaco earlier this week.



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Two more car bombs kill 7 in Algeria as election nears

ALGIERS (AFP) — Two car bombs exploded Friday in one of Algeria's great Islamic cities, killing seven people and injuring 12 less than two weeks before legislative elections, the security services said.

One of the targets in Tlemcen, 400 kilometres from the capital Algiers, was the Mughreb Hotel, where members of a commission overseeing the June 5 polls were staying, officials said.

"The hotel was practically blown away," a resident said. "The explosion could be heard for kilometres around."

The other car bomb went off in the old, low-income Bab-Ezzir district of the city, site of several brothels — regarded as immoral by Algeria's Islamist fundamentalists. Dozens of houses were damaged, residents

said. Both car bombs went off minutes apart, at around 4:40 a.m. (03:30 GMT). The security services called them "criminal acts."

Residents, contacted by telephone, told AFP that eight people had died, and that 60 to 100 had been injured.

But it was not known if members of the electoral commission, known as Cnise, were among the casualties.

Islamists were immediately suspected of setting the bombs. They have been waging a virtual civil war since 1992 against the military-backed government of north Africa's largest country.

President Liamine Zeroual is determined that the upcoming elections pass smoothly, as proof to the world that

Algeria has "exterminated" militants who want to establish an Islamist regime.

Tlemcen, set in a picturesque region of olive groves and vineyards, is regarded as one of the great Islamic cities of Algeria, with a rich history going back to the 13th century when it was an Arab Sultanate. It is home to 200,000 people.

Friday's attacks came a day after a car bomb went off in Boufarik, near Algiers, killing at least 12 people and injuring 31, according to the security services.

On May 15, 32 villagers — mostly women and children — were massacred in a pre-dawn attack on an isolated collective farm at Chebli, southwest of Algiers in an area that has seen many violent attacks.

Separately, the security ser-

vices said Friday its forces had killed a total of 27 armed Islamists in various operations in Algiers, Laghouat and Tissemsilt.

It was the first time in more than a year that the security services have issued such a battle report, although tolls from other operations do appear in the Algerian press.

In the latest operations, eight automatic pistols, five hunting rifles, four sub-machine guns, four home-made bombs and three scanner radio receivers were seized, the security services said.

Within Algiers, they added, four were killed in the suburban Bourouba district, two in a hotel on Tangiers street in the city centre, and two in another suburb, Bab-Ezzouar.

Most Israelis 'not satisfied' with Netanyahu after one year — poll

TEL AVIV (AP) — A majority of Israelis gave Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a thumbs down when asked to evaluate him after one year in office, according to a poll published Friday.

Asked if they are satisfied with Mr. Netanyahu's general performance, 62 per cent said they were not, 31 per cent said they were and seven per cent were undecided.

Mr. Netanyahu scored highest on security. Forty-four per cent said they were satisfied with his performance on security-related matters, while 49 per

cent said they were not.

Reflecting public reaction to a recent scandal that rocked Mr. Netanyahu's government, 65 per cent said they did not believe Mr. Netanyahu was running a government properly.

Overall, Mr. Netanyahu's approval rating — one a scale from zero to 10 — fell to 5.17 from 5.54 five months ago, according to the Gallup poll published in the Maariv newspaper Friday.

Mr. Netanyahu narrowly beat former Prime Minister Shimon Peres in May 1996 elections on a platform of

"peace and security."

A year after voting him into office, 56 per cent of Israelis say it is more likely Mr. Netanyahu will lead the country toward war than toward peace with the Arabs. Twenty-three per cent thought Israel was headed towards peace with its Arab neighbours and 21 per cent were undecided.

In the evaluation of the cabinet, Mr. Netanyahu ranked 15th among 18 ministers, with popular Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai in the top slot.

The poll questioned 491 Israeli adults by telephone and has a margin of error

of 4.5 per cent.

Israel's previous government began a peace process with the Palestinians that led to partial Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Netanyahu's predecessors also made peace with Jordan and held peace talks with Syria.

But during Mr. Netanyahu's rule, relations between Israel and the Palestinians hit a low point over the expansion of Jewish settlements. Talks with Syria, on hold before the elections, never resumed.

Israel, Russia sign deal to fight organised crime

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel and Russia have signed a cooperation agreement to fight organised crime and international terrorism.

Israel's police have long warned that the Russian mafia is flourishing in Israel, and estimated that Russian mobsters have laundered billions of dollars in Israel.

Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov held a series of meetings with police officials during a visit to Israel this week on how to tackle the Russian mafia. On Thursday, he signed a crime-fighting agreement with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy which also includes efforts to stem international terror.

Mr. Kulikov also took home a list of 34 Israeli

immigrants from Russia whose Israeli citizenship may be revoked on suspicion of involvement with the Russian mafia.

Both Israel and Russia will increase their staff at embassies in Moscow and Tel Aviv. Last month, Israeli police announced that their international crime-fighting division will be increased fivefold to take on Russian mafia operations.

Mr. Kulikov also met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit. He will also hold talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat next week in the Gaza Strip.

Russia, as a sponsor of Mideast peace talks, assists the Palestinians in training personnel and police.

Yeltsin discusses peace process over telephone

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin, eager to demonstrate Russia's clout as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, discussed the stalled negotiations Wednesday with the visiting Syrian foreign minister.

During a telephone conversation, Mr. Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharara "underlined the necessity of developing the peace process in line with the U.N. Security Council resolutions and the 'land-for-peace' principle," the Kremlin press service said in an official communiqué.

Mr. Yeltsin confirmed Russian resolve to cooperate with Syria. The foreign minister responded by saying that his country supports intensifying Russia's role in peace efforts.

Russia and the U.S. are co-sponsors of the peace negotiations launched in 1991 in Madrid, Spain.

In recent months, Moscow has tried to encourage the Arabs and Israel to reopen peace negotiations, which broke down in early 1996.

Israeli officials say Russia has a role to play in restarting the talks with Syria but wants the U.S. alone involved in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Moscow was Syria's main arms supplier until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.

Israel has rejected Syrian offers to renew talks because they included a precondition to agree to a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Syria has long demanded the return of the strategic plateau that Israel seized in 1967.

Mr. Sharara told reporters on Wednesday that Mr. Yeltsin stressed the importance of returning the Golan Heights to Syria, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who met with Mr. Sharara on Wednesday, also appeared to bow to Syria's demands at a news conference after the talks, saying peace is not possible without returning all previously seized territories.

Summit on Sudan conflict next week

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenya confirmed Thursday that it will host a regional summit next week on the conflict between Sudan and Uganda, which agreed two weeks ago to end hostilities.

The foreign ministry said the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), headed by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi and grouping Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, would meet next Wednesday.

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni pledged after meeting with Mr. Moi in western Kenya on to end hostilities and "open a new chapter" in their troubled relations, May 10.

The two countries have been at loggerheads over the past two years with Sudan accusing Uganda of backing the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which is battling Sudanese

troops in southern Sudan.

Uganda has denied the charge and for its part accuses Khartoum of supporting the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement fighting in northern Uganda to overthrow Mr. Museveni's government.

The two neighbours broke diplomatic relations in April 1995 over the mutual recriminations.

Sudan's official news agency, SUNA, announced Sunday that SPLA Chief John Garang had been invited to the IGADD meeting. The SPLA, in alliance with the opposition in the north, began a massive offensive in January in eastern and southern Sudan aimed at ending the domination of the mainly Christian and animist south by the Arabised north.

SUNA said the Nairobi summit should allow IGADD to "move forward" the peace process. Earlier talks sponsored by IGADD were suspended in 1994.

South African women's groups outraged over official rape tip

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Women's groups are outraged over the latest advice from public officials to rapists that they should masturbate instead of attacking women.

"Stay healthy and masturbate," said the item in a newsletter published by the provincial Gauteng public safety ministry. "Stop raping our mothers, wives, sisters and children."

The advice showed police have no understanding of the crime of rape, women's organisations told the independent daily, The Star, on Friday.

"Rape is about power. It is not just about physical penetration, but can involve the use of bottles," said Mmatshilo Mosei of the Agisano Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) Programme.

ADAPT is a rape crisis cen-

tre in the black township of Alexandra which also runs self-help groups for men who abuse their spouses.

"We are disgusted," Mr. Mosei said. Sally Shackleton from People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) said: "Rape is an act of violence, it has nothing to do with sex."

Newsletter editor Mike Mabasa said the ministry had decided to take a strong stand against rape and "create an awareness within the force... We are serious about ridding not only society, but the police force, of this crime."

Last year, 19 policemen were arrested for rape. Playing on the fight against apartheid before 1994's first all-race elections, the Newsletter item also said that another word for masturbation is "arm struggle... Join the arm struggle and stop raping," it said.



ELECTIONS TO CHOOSE THE BEST ISLAMIST: Iranian police guard an intersection in front of a poster showing the late founder of the Iranian Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (R) and the current supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during presidential elections on Friday. Iranians vote for a successor to retiring President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in a battle between conservative and moderate factions (Reuters photo)

Turkish coalition MP quits in Islamist row

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish deputy from the secularist wing of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist-led coalition resigned Friday in a fresh blow to the government.

Anatolian news agency said Deputy Samil Ayrim quit the conservative True Path Party, after he had been quoted in the Turkish press as saying he would step down as part of a row over the government's Islamist leanings.

Anatolian also said one of the True Path deputy chairmen, Necmettin Cevheri, resigned his post. Mr. Cevheri was formerly close to party leader Tansu Ciller, who was Turkey's first

woman prime minister and is now the foreign minister.

"I have forwarded my resignation to the chairwoman this morning," the news agency quoted him as saying.

The deputy's resignation leaves the coalition with 279 deputies, a slim majority in the 550-member parliament.

Intense pressure from the army for Mr. Erbakan to crack down on Islamist activists has opened up serious cracks in the 11-month-old coalition.

Mr. Erbakan won an opposition censure motion this week by only half a dozen votes. He was helped by six deputies from a

small right-wing party who backed the government.

The Hürriyet daily quoted Mr. Ayrim as saying he wished he had withdrawn support for Mr. Erbakan at the censure motion. "I have realised how wrong I was," he said.

The cabinet failed to hold a scheduled meeting on Thursday for the eighth week running amid reports that Mrs. Ciller had asked Mr. Erbakan to hand her the reins of power.

Mr. Erbakan's Islam-based Welfare Party is facing a case in the constitutional court that could lead to its closure on grounds that it threatens Turkey's official secularism.

U.S. Jewish body plans to foster pluralism in Israel

Liberal American Jews' donations to Israel slump

CHICAGO (AFP) — The United Jewish Appeal (UJA), concerned about slumping donations from liberal U.S. Jews because of Israel's hardline policies, is joining a fundraising drive to foster religious pluralism in Israel, officials said Thursday.

At a closed-door meeting here last week, UJA officials agreed to help leaders of U.S. reform and conservative Jewish movements raise an extra \$20 million a year to promote tolerance and religious tolerance in Israel.

The two movements represent 80 per cent of Jews affiliated with synagogues in the United States.

"We have said to those movements that if they come to U.S. with legitimate projects to promote religious pluralism in Israel, we will put our fundraising apparatus at their disposal to help them raise the money," UJA chief operating officer Bernard Moscovitz

told AFP.

Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline policies in peace talks with the Palestinians and in the religious field have triggered outrage among some liberal, secular U.S. Jews.

Some Jewish liberals are particularly incensed by the backing given by the Netanyahu-led coalition to draft legislation that would not recognise non-orthodox conversions performed in Israel. They see the bill as delegitimising U.S. Jewry.

"We have become a battlefield. It's inappropriate that organisations that raise money that goes to poor Ethiopian kids or old ladies in Kiev should have to suffer because people are angry at the Israeli government," Mr. Moscovitz said.

He stressed that the UJA, the bedrock of U.S. Jewish fundraising, was a pluralistic organisation that worked with all branches of the Jewish

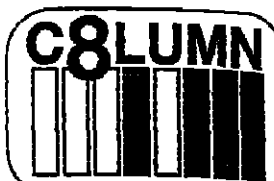
faith, including Orthodox groups.

Noting that U.S. Jews identified the UJA closely with Israel, he added: "I understand what's happened. But if you have a fight, an argument you should address (your criticism) to the government of Israel or the Knesset (parliament)."

Press reports said San Francisco's Jewish community had cut support for traditional charities by \$1 million and other communities across the country were following suit.

The UJA sends about \$300 million a year to Israel, part of the estimated \$1 billion sent by U.S. private Jewish philanthropic groups every year.

The U.S. donations are distributed in Israel by the Jewish agency and the joint distribution committee to help Jews around the world immigrate to Israel or to fund Jewish relief in 60 countries.



400 world artefacts to be featured in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) —

The world's largest museum chain is to open a collection of incredible artefacts in Hong Kong that will challenge conventional beliefs and astound the senses. The Ripley's believe it or not "Odditorium" will open in Hong Kong's peak tower complex on June 17 and feature over 400 artefacts from around the globe. One of the highlights of the museum will be a display of models and pictures depicting the story of an Australian man who survived a vicious attack by a great white shark. The Ripley's Chain was founded by American cartoonist Robert L. Ripley, in the 1930's after he collected unusual artefacts from 198 countries. There are now 26 Ripley's museums worldwide.

Busey to undergo tumour surgery

WASHINGTON (AFP) —

Actor Gary Busey, 52, will undergo surgery Saturday to remove a plum-size tumour in his sinus cavity, which was detected after he suffered severe nose bleeds. The motorcycle buff who kicked a drug habit and survived a very serious motorcycle accident said he was not overly concerned about going under the knife. "I have a good track record for survival. This is another notch in the gun butt."

Girl of 12 refuses to wear jock strap

WASHINGTON (AFP) —

A 12-year-old girl was banned from her position as catcher in a Florida baseball youth league because she refused to wear a male jock strap and cup as protection, claiming she had nothing to protect. The umpire decision to ban her to the outfield earlier this week raised a storm of protest in Boca Raton, Florida, and around the country getting plenty of air time on television. On Thursday, the Brubaha ended when Melissa Raglin turned up for her game wearing a female jock strap and cup somebody sent her in the mail.

Blondie in for a reunion

HONG KONG (AFP) —

A decade after "Blondie" split up, U.S. pop icon Debbie Harry is getting ready for a reunion of the band that scored such teeny bop hits as "Heart Of Glass" and "Sunday Girl" in the 1970s and 1980s. Harry, looking heavier but retaining her radiant smile, said she was going back into the studio with original band member and long-term partner Chris Stein to relaunch the group. The former sex symbol, who now goes by the name of Deborah, said the new songs will be included in a compilation album of remastered greatest hits. Several U.S. dates have already been pencilled in for the reformed Blondie, but whether a full blooded comeback tour will follow remains undecided. "We'll see how it goes," the singer said. Harry has also been pursuing an on-off film career, appearing in such films "Videodrome" and "Union City Blues."